



CORNBOW £1m SHOPS REVAMP

Report by David Cosgrove

WORK has started on a £1.2 million investment programme to revamp Halesowen's Cornbow shopping centre.

The work will take place in two phases with the first part concentrating on the outside of the centre.

It will involve the removal of the existing canopies from the façade of the shopping centre, on Hagley Street and Queensway Mall.

The towers to the Hagley Street elevation will be replaced with a new entrance canopy, to provide visitors with a more modern and open entrance. Exterior walls will benefit from a deep-clean, which will improve the overall look of the centre. Phase one works are due to be completed in the autumn.

Adrian Oliver, owner of Cornbow Shopping Centre, said: "The existing canopies and structural beams around the centre are outdated and in need of modernising. These improvements will make the entrance area and shop fronts clearer and lighter for pedestrians. "It's business as usual at The Cornbow. All works will be done out of normal trading hours, in the evening, to ensure any disruption to local businesses and the general public will be minimal."

Design

"Cornbow's existing 45 outlets – including New Look, Peacocks, Clarks, Greggs and Druckers – will remain open throughout the improvements."

Active Construction, based in Coventry, has been selected to complete the works and CBRE, based in Birmingham, has been appointed as project managers to oversee the design and planning of the improvements.

Paul Roberts, construction director at Active Construction, said: "We are delighted to be working with The Cornbow to see through these vital improvement works at the Halesowen shopping centre."

"Restoring and regenerating the shopping centre will not only support the existing tenants but it will help attract more customers, as well as encouraging further retail and leisure investment at the centre."

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS FLORAL DISPLAYS



Chair of Halesowen in Bloom Eve O'Connor, left, shows competition judges Trish Willetts and Graham Redfern a floral display

HALESOWEN is looking blooming great as it awaits the verdict of Britain in Bloom's judges.

The town has entered the Royal Horticultural Society competition and is going for gold again.

Volunteers have been busy dressing homes, businesses, streets and parks with flowers and plants ahead of the prestigious contest.

Halesowen North's councillor Hilary Bills said that the town looks 'fantastic' as a result of all the floral efforts.

Judges visited the town earlier this month

and were given a tour by organisers which lasted around two-and-a-half hours.

Councillor Bills said: "They were very impressed with our volunteers and the people of Halesowen who have made it happen."

Park

The judges were taken to Leasowes Park and Leasowes Walled Garden, which was built in the mid-18th century by poet and landscape pioneer William Shenstone. Leasowes is listed as Grade 1 on the English Heritage list of parks and Gardens of historic interest.

The judge will announce the results in September, when they can hand out gold, silver gilt, silver and bronze awards.

Halesowen has won gold for the past two years running as part of its Halesowen in Bloom efforts.

Among the designs that judges Trish Willetts, of Solihull, and Graham Redfern, from Worcester, viewed was a flower display on a white cart with wheels.

Halesowen in Bloom used to be organised by Dudley Council but volunteers stepped in when the local authority cut funding.

ACCIDENT

Elderly woman is injured in collision

AN elderly woman was seriously injured after being hit by a car near a Dudley supermarket.

The victim, aged 88, suffered 'very serious leg and pelvic injuries' in the incident involving a Nissan Note, at the back of the Co-op, off Market Street, Kingswinford, at around 10am on Tuesday.

The woman was taken to the major trauma centre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham. The driver of the car, a 75-year-old woman, was treated for shock.

FUNDING

Leader tribute cash will help trainees

MONEY raised following the death of former Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper will be used to help young apprentices in the borough.

More than £1,500 was raised at a tribute event after Councillor Cooper's sudden death last year.

The cash will now be distributed in the form of £100 grants to support apprentices in various ways.

DEATH

Body found in brook is missing man, 50

A MAN who was found dead in a brook at Coseley has been named as missing man Glyn Davies.

An area was cordoned off near to Bourne Street, Coseley, at 8.30pm on Sunday following the discovery.

Police have now confirmed the man has been identified as 50-year-old Mr Davies, who went missing from a care home in Sandwell. He had not been seen since July 4.

West Midlands Police said the death was not being treated as suspicious.

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WONDERLAND IS ON THE WAY



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EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: dudley.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

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E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

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E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, July 27, 2017

Plaque will honour First World War hero



Pte Barratt died aged 22

A PLAQUE will be unveiled in memory of a Victoria Cross recipient from the Black Country – exactly a century after he was posthumously awarded the honour.

Private Thomas Barratt, who died during the First World War, will be honoured with the unveiling of a plaque at Coseley Memorial, Vicarage Road, today (Thursday).

Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Dave Tyler, will be joined by the High Sheriff of the West Midlands, John Hudson, Staffordshire County President of the Royal British Legion, Peter Matthews,

and relatives of Mr Barratt at the ceremony.

The borough commemoration will include a short service led by Reverend Emma Stanford from Christ Church, Coseley.

Private Barratt, a soldier with the South Staffordshire Regiment, was posthumously awarded the VC for action at Passchendaele. His patrol came under fire from German snipers, which pinned down the patrol.

Private Barratt volunteered to cover the withdrawal of his comrades. Under heavy machine and rifle fire, he sin-

gle-handedly held off the enemy, shooting at least six of them. Barratt, aged 22, almost made it back himself but was killed by a shell.

Councillor Tyler said: "It is a great privilege and an honour to be part of a special service in memory of a true hero, who gave his life whilst saving the lives of his comrades. The bravery of Private Thomas Barratt should never be forgotten and the memorial stone is a fitting tribute."

A block of flats in Batmanshill Road, Tipton, was also named Barratt Court after the young soldier in 2012.

MP demands truth over contaminated blood scandal

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin is demanding that the Government reveals the truth about the contaminated blood scandal that has left 2,400 people dead.

The Labour MP is supporting many other MPs in calling for a 'full, fair and lasting settlement' for victims after speaking with constituents who were infected by tainted blood products.

Former Health Secretary Andy Burnham claims there has been a cover up.

It came as another MP accused the Government of riding 'roughshod' over the wishes of victims by letting the Department of Health (DoH) be involved in the inquiry.

Labour MP Diana Johnson said allowing the DoH to be part of the probe was like 'asking South Yorkshire Police to lead an inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster'. She has called for a full independent inquiry.

Earlier this month Theresa May announced an investigation would be held into how thousands of haemophiliacs and others were given blood products infected with hepatitis C and HIV during the 1970s and 1980s.

Mr Austin, who is a member of the all-party parliamentary campaign on haemophilia and contaminated blood, said he believes the facts of the scandal have been covered up for years

More pupils are being expelled from school

THE number of pupils expelled from schools in the Black Country rose by more than a quarter in a year – a second successive increase – with Dudley the worst area.

In total, 454 students in the Black Country and Staffordshire were ordered to permanently leave their school year 2015/16.

Persistent disruptive behaviour was the most common reason given but violent attacks on pupils and staff as well as drugs and alcohol misuse were also the basis of the decisions.

Across the region, it was Dudley with the highest rate of children expelled from its schools, 82 pupils – a rate of 0.17 pupils per 100. In Walsall the rate was 0.16 with 78 expelled. In Wolverhampton it was 0.15 with 63 pupils expelled, Staffordshire was 0.13 with 152 and Sandwell 0.14 with 79.

Travesty

Dudley Council's cabinet member for children's services, Anne Millward, said she would be calling for action.

She said: "Any child expelled from school is a travesty. We need to get a grip of this, find out what measures can be taken to stop so many children being expelled.

"Kids should be in school to be educated, the fact they are expelled means they are losing out on education.

"I'd like to find out what more we can do to help particular groups of people. This is a real concern."

The statistics, released by the Department for Education, showed school bosses handed out almost 59,631 exclusions to pupils. Most were in Staffordshire – 17,304 – followed by Sandwell (13,117).

Nansi Ellis, of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "These figures make for sobering reading, particularly when we see the continuing disproportionate exclusion of pupils in poverty or with a special educational need."

Black Country festival fun continues



Sophie Webster and Stephanie Craig enjoying a sing-a-long at the Brockmoor and Pensnett Black Country Fun Day

THE Dell sports stadium was taken over by Black Country Festival fever as thousands of people turned out to join in the fun.

There was a funfair, food and craft stalls and live music at the Brockmoor and Pensnett Black Country Fun Day, described as the 'jewel in the crown' of the month-

long festival, which celebrates the region's heritage.

Brockmoor and Pensnett ward councillor Judy Foster, who attended the fun day, said: "I would say this event has been the jewel in the crown of the Black Country Festival we really hope it can continue to be an annual event."

Thousands also attended the Brier Fair held in nearby Brierley Hill.

The Black Country Festival will culminate with the Coseley Festival on Sunday, which will see live entertainment and a range of stalls at Castle Street, Roseville.

● **Brier Fair – see page 18**

Property firm has invested £42m

PROPERTY, investment and management company London and Cambridge Properties made £42 million worth of acquisitions in the first half of this year

James Buchanan, investment director for Kingswinford-based LCP, said the increase in its portfolio across the UK demonstrated LCP's commitment to investing in industrial and retail sites.

"So far this year we have added another 400,000 sq ft of industrial and retail space to our portfolio and we continue to seek commercial property that we can add value to through our active asset management approach," he said.

"Last year, we invested £98 million across 41 sites in the UK."

This year has seen the group acquire 18 sites, including Churnet Park, in Leek, Staffordshire.

Supermarket jobs

ONLY a handful of jobs remained available at a supermarket in Sedgley ahead of its opening next month.

Asda has taken over the former Co-op in Sedgley and will open on August 14, having created 80 new jobs to join the 70 staff who have stayed on from Co-op.

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AA offices deal drives hopes for more jobs

JOB hopes have been raised in the Black Country after the Automobile Association signed a deal to expand its call centre in Oldbury.

The AA has committed to 10 more years at Swallowfield One, next to Birchley Island, and is expanding to take on all 111,000 sq ft of the building.

The breakdown and insurance organisation currently employs around 600 at Swallowfield One and said its expansion would "hopefully lead to further job creation in the local area".

It is the centre of the AA's road operations and is home to its main call centre and offices.

Up until last year the AA shared the building with British Gas-owner Centrica, which employed 645 people there, but the energy company shut its offices last year as part of cost-cutting moves.

British Gas said in January it had found jobs elsewhere for 420 of the former Oldbury staff.

A team from the Midlands office of property adviser GVA sealed the lease extension deal with the AA to take on the other half of the building as part of its new 10-year agreement.

The AA's Jon Ellis said: "This location is already home to our main call centre with a great location close to the national motorway network.

"We can now fulfil our ambition to create a centre of excellence here, hopefully leading to further job creation."

The AA has more than 15 million members serviced from seven centres, including Oldbury which handles emergency breakdowns, customer services, training and member services.

Police in appeal after vans stolen

POLICE are investigating after two Mercedes Sprinter vans were stolen from driveways in Rowley Regis.

One van was stolen from Sandford Avenue sometime between 11.30pm on July 22 and 1pm on July 23. The other was stolen from Bell End on July 23 between 1.30am and 1.40am.

Police are investigating whether the thefts are linked.

Anyone with information should call Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Lane closure on hill

A LANE closure will be in place on a busy road in Halesowen until the end of next week.

Work on Mucklow Hill, Halesowen, will see restrictions imposed between 9.30am and 3.30pm until August 4.

House proposed for pub's car park



The Haden Cross pub, Cradley Heath

A COMPANY that saw plans to put a shop on a pub car park defeated by a community campaign now wants to build a house on the site instead.

A Co-op store was originally planned to go next to The Haden Cross pub in Cradley Heath but was refused due to the wave of objections from residents of the area.

Many felt the arrival of the shop would have had a damaging impact to the pub, as it would have meant a loss of parking spaces.

New River Retail, which bought the pub from Marston's, now wants

to build a semi-detached house on the site in Halesowen Road.

Campaigners say they believe the company is determined to develop the land after seeing the Co-op bid fail.

The Friends of Haden Cross group, which helped see off the shop plans with a hard-fought campaign, has reacted to the new application with caution. Member Tim Haskey said he was waiting to meet with officials with New River Retail to find out what impact the house would have on the pub. It is believed it would take up around eight parking spaces.

The group secured an Asset for Community Value for the pub, including the car park, which makes it more difficult to gain approval for any development unpopular with the community.

Mr Haskey said: "We are considering our position with this application. "New River's asset development director has agreed to meet with us to discuss the planning application. The questions we want to raise are what it will mean for the pub and whether they are prepared to invest in the pub to help it flourish and grow"

Massive haul of illegal tobacco seized in blitz

MORE than 100,000 illegal cigarettes and hundreds of packets of tobacco were seized during one year in Dudley and Sandwell

The number of illegal tobacco products seized in Dudley doubled during 2016/17 – with 78,000 cigarettes and 519 packets of tobacco worth more than £16,000 – when trading standards swooped on shops. In Sandwell, 33,750 cigarettes and 2kg of tobacco were taken off shelves.

Trading standards said the products were either counterfeit – possibly including toxins that pose a risk to health – or had not had tax paid on them, denying the public purse thousands of pounds.

The figures show illegal cigarettes and tobacco being sold in Black Country shops continues to be a major concern.

Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member responsible for trading standards at Dudley Council, said: "Our trading standards officers are doing some excellent work to clamp down on this issue. Anyone selling illegal products could face serious penalties through the courts."

Suspended

Five business owners have been taken to court, with one which was operating in Sandwell given a suspended prison sentence and 200 hours of unpaid work.

Dudley Council visited 168 premises in total, with the illegal haul of tobacco from April 2016 to March this year coming from a total of 10 premises.

Trading standards are continuing to crack down through spot checks and test purchases.

Councillor Miller said: "This is far from a victimless crime. Illegal tobacco trade creates a cheap source (of tobacco) for children and young people. While all tobacco is harmful, the illegal tobacco market – in particular the availability of cheap cigarettes – makes it harder for smokers to quit and remain smoke free."

He added: "The loss to the taxpayer means less money being spent on local communities, schools and the NHS."

'Phoenix' restaurant thanks firefighters



Manager Adam Thompson and chef Chris Barnett hand out breakfasts as a 'thank you' to firefighters

IT'S like a phoenix from the ashes – those were the words used by firefighters who battled to save Hickory's Smokehouse in Wall Heath as it was engulfed by flames only 11 months ago.

The restaurant, which was almost totally destroyed by fire in August, has been completely re-

built and remodelled – and is now open to the public again. On Saturday the venue welcomed back dozens of firefighters who fought the blaze caused by a faulty electrical appliance.

Bosses also paid homage to the fire crews with a 'phoenix' painting taking pride of place. Dannie

Hinds, watch commander from Brierley Hill, said: "The fire is up there as one of the biggest I have dealt with. What a tremendous job has been done in just under 12 months to bring it back to life."

Owner Neil McDonnell said: "This is less of a relaunch, more like a total rebirth."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Public meeting on travellers' camps

A PUBLIC meeting will take place after a series of illegal travellers camps were set up in the Black Country.

Councillors, officials and police will attend to speak with residents about their concerns. Dudley has experienced several site invasions this summer. Specialist cleaners had to be brought in to clear up after an illegal camp in Brierley Hill.

The meeting has been organised by Amblecote's Councillor Paul Bradley. He said: "We had a blitzkrieg type of invasion a couple of weeks ago. Local residents are very unsettled." The meeting is at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on August 16 at 7pm.

Church coffee morning invitation

A CHURCH is holding a coffee morning tomorrow (Friday) and all are welcome.

The Ebenezer Baptist Church, in St Andrew's Street, Netherton, is holding the event from 10am.

The church regularly holds coffee mornings on the last Friday of the month, held between 10am and 12 noon.

A spokesperson for the church said: "It's a nice, relaxed and friendly atmosphere, and everyone is welcome.

"Admission is free so why not pop along?"

Doreen at Steve Bull charity ball

POP icons from the 1980s Go West and Black Country comedy character Doreen Tipton will star at an upcoming charity ball.

The Steve Bull Foundation event will also feature a four-course dinner, a charity auction and raffle.

Tickets cost £75 each, £700 for a 'silver' table for 10, £1,100 for a 'gold' table of 10, and £1,650 for a 'VIP Sponsor' table of 10.

The event will be taking place at the ICC in Birmingham city centre on September 8.

To book call 0345 095 0024.

Flats are proposed for fly-tipping site

A PLAN has been lodged to create new flats near Stourbridge town centre.

A two-storey block containing six two-bedroom flats and single studio flat is being proposed for a site at Worcester Street, Stourbridge, just off the town's ring road.

Developers say the project would be a good use of a site that has been a target for fly-tipping. The plans are to be considered by Dudley Council planners.

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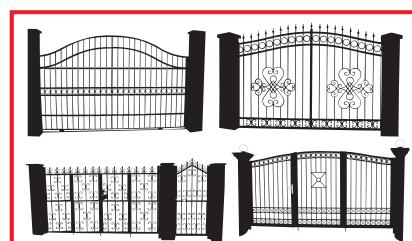
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Financial probe finds failings at three schools academy trust

A PROBE into an academy trust which runs three schools in Dudley has uncovered 'significant failings and weaknesses in financial management'.

The investigation into the DRB Ignite multi-academy trust – which runs Beechwood CE Primary in Dudley, The Bromley Pensnett Primary in Brierley Hill and Hob Green Primary in Stourbridge – also raised concerns about 'governance arrangements'.

First sighting of UFO in 20 years...

ENDURING rockers UFO will return to the West Midlands to headline Birmingham's Town Hall tonight (Thursday).

They will be previewing their new album, A Conspiracy of Stars, which features Phil Mogg, Paul Raymond, Andy Parker, Vinnie Moore and Rob De Luca. It is the first time that UFO have recorded a new record in the UK for 20 years.

A Conspiracy of Stars was produced and mixed by Chris Tsanagides (Judas Priest, Thin Lizzy). It features original members Phil Mogg (vocals), Paul Raymond (keyboards, guitar) and Andy Parker (drums), alongside lead guitarist Vinnie Moore, who has been a permanent member since 2003, and American bassist Rob De Luca, who joined the band in 2012. The band was first formed in 1969.

Trust bosses have been warned that if they cannot meet imposed conditions then the Government could take over the running of the schools.

The review was sparked after allegations on financial issues at The Bromley Pensnett Primary last July.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) investigators visited the schools in February and 'identified a number of significant failings and weaknesses in governance arrangements that breach the Academies Financial Handbook'.

Control

The review concludes: "The issues identified in the report need to be urgently addressed."

Richard Martin, chairman of DRB Ignite Multi Academy Trust, said: "The EFSA has issued DRB Ignite Multi Academy Trust with a Financial Notice to Improve as a result of an financial audit in February. Since receiving the draft report, DRB Ignite Multi Academy Trust has made significant progress in addressing the areas needed for improvement. It has acted swiftly on a number of fronts, most importantly a root and branch review of its governance structures and financial controls. DRB Ignite Multi Academy Trust is confident that it will meet and fulfil all compliance requirements."

Howzat for a mayoral fundraiser



Preparing for the charity match are, from left, Mayor Dave Tyler, Rita Pearce, club chairman Harilal Patel and Mohammed Hanif

CRICKET fans will be stumping up cash for a mayor's chosen charities at an annual match in Stourbridge next month.

The Mayor of Dudley's annual charity cricket match is in its 10th year and takes place on August 11, featuring teams of Dudley Council officers, councillors and charity supporters.

Teams of six will go head-to-head in a series of games with all proceeds going to those charities chosen by the

mayor, Councillor Dave Tyler, which are Dudley Mind, YMCA and Dudley Alzheimer's Society.

The game, at Stourbridge Cricket Club, High Street, starts at 6pm and spectators are welcome. The club is also celebrating its 175th year.

Councillor Tyler said: "The annual cricket match is always a lot of fun and also a great way to raise money for three worthy causes."

"Stourbridge Cricket Club is a fab-

ulous venue for the game and we very much appreciate their support for these charities. I hope to see as many people as possible on the night."

Among the councillors taking part are former mayors Mohammed Hanif and Steve Waltho.

Cricket fan Councillor Hanif helped to start the event in 2007 after a match between the club and councillors took place. Now it takes place between councillors and council staff.

Burglar jailed for raids on six homes

A BURGLAR who snatched thousands of pounds worth of items from six homes and a garage has been jailed for three years.

Among the possessions stolen by David Whyte to fund his drink and drug habit was a watch given to one of his victims by her late father.

The 25-year-old swiped car keys, a Galaxy tablet, a sat nav and a phone during his crime spree.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court, Whyte pleaded guilty to a burglary in Sedgley Road, Dudley, on March 17.

Mrs Sati Ruck, prosecuting, said the victim returned home to find items including cash and jewellery worth £5,500 had been taken. Whyte was caught on CCTV at the back of the property.

The court also heard about a second burglary committed by Whyte in nearby Woodcroft Avenue. He burgled the home while the homeowners were on holiday, where he caused £2,000 worth of damage.

Whyte, of Hallewell Road, Edgbaston, asked the judge to take five further burglaries into consideration, including one in Dudley.

Mr Colin McCarraher, defending, said: "He is not the brightest of men and like many others he fell foul of drink. He also developed a habit using ecstasy and M-Cat."

Muddy good show from Tom and co

AN eight-year-old cancer survivor took part in a mud-splattered fundraiser for charity. Tom Griffiths was one of 300 children to participate in Cancer Research UK's Pretty Muddy Kids at Cofton Park, Longbridge. He was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in 2013 aged just four. The event raised around £275,000.

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£1.2m canal revamp aiming to improve people's health

COUNCIL chiefs say more than £1 million will be spent upgrading a three-mile stretch of the canal in Sandwell.

The canal towpath between Smethwick Galton Bridge, Sandwell & Dudley and Dudley Port rail stations is set for a £1.2 million revamp.

A council report says the cash will come from a West Midlands Combined Authority fund to improve cycle routes in the Midlands. According to the authority, the Managing Short Trips strategy aims to 'create an extensive, safe and coherent network of well-designed off and on-road links' across the region.

Fun seekers led from Alton Towers ride

A POPULAR ride at fun park Alton Towers was evacuated on Tuesday after it broke down.

Passengers were escorted from the Oblivion ride at the north Staffordshire theme park as their carriage stopped close to the highest point of the ride, which features an 180ft drop, around 2.30pm.

Alton Towers stressed the incident was a routine stoppage.

A spokesman added: "This afternoon Oblivion stopped after a sensor on the ride detected a minor technical fault. The ride performed exactly as it is designed to do.

"In line with our well-rehearsed procedures, guests were assisted from the ride. At no point was guest safety compromised."

A witness said: "People were led down two by two, each descent taking approximately 35 minutes."

Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways, said: "Any improvements that we can make to the canals – either appearance, safety or other things – are to be welcomed.

"This work will benefit the community in a number of ways – that can be either exercise or for seeing wildlife and nature, as well as making them safer.

Benefits

"I think we should be using our canals more for all sorts of things, and if we can help then we will. The improvement work will hopefully have health benefits and it needs to be done."

A report for the council cabinet says the work is a key part of its 2017-18 programme which says: "The WMCA Managing Short Trips programme will fund works on the Birmingham Canal between Galton Bridge, Sandwell & Dudley Railway Station and Albion Road."

The report sets out the potential health benefits of the canal work. It states: "In 2012, 24.5 per cent of Year 6 children and 25.4 per cent of adults in Sandwell were classified as obese, with levels of physical activity and life expectancy being worse than the England average."

A dog's tale of town landmarks



Will McQuire and Jenny Houston with their children's book, *Catch That Dog!*

A CHILDREN'S book has been launched which follows the path of a dog who sneaks out of his house and visits landmarks around a Black Country town.

Catch That Dog! has been published by Halesowen couple Jenny Houston, aged 26, and New Zealand-born Will McQuire, 27.

The tale follows the story of a Scottish Terrier called Harvey, who takes an unprompted visit around Halesowen looking at its landmarks, including Saint John's Church, Leasowes Park, Halesowen Library and various shops in the town.

Jenny said: "We want to encourage children to read, by making books that feature their very own town with places they recognise."

First

Will added: "We wanted to promote local stories."

The couple formed their own publishing company, Halesowen Homemade, six months ago. *Catch That Dog!* is their first book.

Schools across Halesowen have snapped up the book while Dudley Council has also made it available in its libraries.

Visit www.halesowenhomemade.com or www.facebook.co.uk/halesowenhomemade for further details.

School meal price hike for Dudley

SCHOOL dinner prices are going up by ten pence a day in Dudley – making them among the priciest.

The cost of school meals at primary, secondary schools and academies will rise from the start of term in September going up to £2.30 – meaning parents will now pay £11.50 a week.

The price of individual items at snack shops across the borough's 105 schools will also rise by 4.5 per cent.

The changes are expected to bring in an extra £144,000 on top of the £3.2 million already paid for school meals in the borough.

Council bosses say that it is due to the soaring cost of food.

It means Dudley will be among the authority with the highest charges, alongside Sandwell at £2.30, Birmingham £2.20, Staffordshire and Walsall at £2.10.

Councillor Ian Kettle, Dudley's cabinet member for planning and economic development, who authorised the decision, said: "Research by the staff and officers showed that it was necessary. Around 50 to 60 per cent of the increase is annual to cover inflation. There is not a great increment on top of that.

"here will be some families who will feel it, we are aware of that, but unfortunately these things need to be done."

Former school governor Abdul Qadus, from Stourbridge, has three children at school in Dudley. He said: "It is ridiculous. It makes a big difference. It is not worth the money for the food that the children get.

"This will be detrimental to families who already financially struggle." In September 2016 a 10p increase was implemented but pupils in Key Stage 1 are now entitled to free school meals, following the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals in September 2014.

Pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 may also be entitled if they meet the criteria.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Working longer is a small price to pay

MAYBE I should be grabbing my banner and marching on parliament, but all I could manage was a weary groan when the "A-word" was used following last week's announcement that us 40-somethings will have to work an extra year to claim our state pension.

Shadow work and pensions secretary Debbie Abrahams said the fact that millions now in their 40s will have to work until 68 was "an astonishing continuation of austerity". Isn't everything, these days? But really, it isn't austerity at all, it is simply facing up to the inevitable.

When the state pension was introduced in 1908, it kicked in at the age of 70, and only 25 per cent of the population would live long enough to receive it. Indeed at the start of the last century, average life expectancy in the UK was 46, so those of us affected by the change now would have been on borrowed time.

Today, we can expect to live to about 80, and the number of people reaching the age of 100 is expected to rise from 6,000 today to 56,000 by 2050. So, in the near future, tens of thousands of pensioners will have been claiming for 35 years. That is clearly not sustainable.

As for those who protest "we've paid in to the system," a maths lesson wouldn't go amiss. If people really took out what they paid into their pensions, their retirement would be very short indeed. It is only because our pension payments are invested in the stock market – those "casino bankers" who are blamed for everything – that we get any meaningful payments at all.

Personally, I'm grateful for the fact that I will probably live longer than previous generations. And if working a year or two extra is the price we have to pay, then we really don't have much to complain about.

□□□

NOT that there seems to be much sign of austerity in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, where it took no fewer than four council officials to issue a £150 fine to a five-year-old girl selling home-made lemonade in the street. They said the girl was breaching street trading regulations, and technically that may have been so. But in any sensible world, the local council would encourage such entrepreneurial flair, not reduce a child to tears.

The council has apologised and revoked the fine, but the damage is done. Isn't it amazing that while cash-strapped councils will shut libraries and museums, reduce bin collections and let the grass grow to balance the books, the cuts never seem to extend to jobsworths like these?

Claim that some media would rather see Britain fail



Liam Fox is critical of the BBC over references to Brexit



Gary Lineker pay for year – TV licence fees from more than 15,000 homes



Jodie Whittaker is the first female Doctor Who. Now for female Dalek?

Is everything now – despite Brexit?

TRADE Secretary Liam Fox says some parts of the media would rather see Britain fail than Brexit succeed: "I cannot recall a single time in recent times when I have seen good economic news that the BBC did not describe as "despite Brexit." Meanwhile, it is reported that the population of gannets on the sea cliffs of Yorkshire has shot up from 2,550 to 13,400. Despite Brexit.

REPORTING the rise in the gannet population, the RSPB hails it as a great breeding success, made possible by rich pickings of fish in the waters of Dogger Bank. Hang on. Aren't those our fish? At what stage does a "success" for the gannets become a threat to our cod and chips?

If you haven't done the sums yet, it takes the TV licence fees from more than 15,000 homes to employ Gary Lineker at the BBC for a year.

THE joy of a Scouse accent. I caught a snippet of a telly interview with a sportswoman from Merseyside explaining how her team had to cope with "them Airedales." Hurdles, apparently.

JODIE Whittaker is the first female Doctor Who. Any suggestions for first female Dalek?

THE Advertising Standards Authority is outlawing gender stereotypes. This new piece of social engineering will ensure there will be no daffy housewives and no kitchen-incompetent husbands appearing in adverts. The harmless amusement known as the battle of the sexes has entertained humankind ever since the first caveman burnt the first mammoth burgers and the first princess reversed her chariot into the

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



river. But no more. As the ASA spokesperson explained grimly: "We know that depicting gender stereotypes in ads has the potential to reinforce expectations as to how groups or individuals should look or behave because of their gender - and that can have a potentially harmful effect." Interestingly, the author of the ASA's mirthless diktat is one Ella Smilie but I guess we're not supposed to laugh at that, either.

YOU would think, would you not, that the most fervent gender campaigns would involve the most blatant discrimination? Not so. Britain has about 40,000 registered midwives but barely 100 of them are male. And yet I hear no shrill protests and see no banners unfurled. A mystery, innit?

AMID thunderous volleys of brilliant reviews, the new Christopher Nolan film Dunkirk is released. No movie can cover every story from the 1940 evacuation and here's one you won't find in Nolan's epic, or in any written account I have seen. It is the tale of the Sixth Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment. None of these Black Country Territorials would claim to be the bravest or the most dashing of soldiers sent over to France. They knew they had been well and truly beaten by the advancing Germans. Yet none of the many survivors I have interviewed over the years recalled any panic or pushing on the beaches. On the contrary, these part-time soldiers were well led and bound together by a strong community spirit. The secret, as they

waited for the boats, was to keep the men busy and prevent them becoming defeatist. So even as the bombs fell, the South Staffs officers and NCOs organised a sports day. A pair of abandoned motorcycles were commandeered and used in races up and down the beach. It must have been a bizarre interlude but stragglers arriving from other units sensed the cohesion of this battalion and attached themselves to it. Which is why the Sixth Battalion claimed the distinction of being the only unit of the British Army to bring more soldiers out of France than it took in.

RESEARCHERS in Exeter and London claim that doing a daily word game such as a crossword, can keep the brain young. What, even those of us who struggle for hours with "Six letters - One whose leader goes out every morning"? Eventually I cracked it: "Editor."

A READER shares the nation's irritation over people who start sentences with "So . . ." but says he's even more angered by politicians who begin their answers with "Look . . ." The ones that infuriate me are the interviewees who, when faced with a killer question, reply: "You know, the question we ought to be asking is . . ."

AS the first contracts are announced, here's an intriguing question. Why did we never have a referendum on HS2? Simple. Because the powers-that-be knew 90 per cent of the British public would vote against it. We love our countryside. We see no reason to arrive in Birmingham 20 minutes earlier. We don't see the point of a railway with hardly any stations. HS2 is a triumph of big money over democracy and our grandchildren will think we were mad. Not mad, kids. Just disenfranchised.

TALKING POINT



The sticky wicket of sexism in sport

CONGRATULATIONS to England's women cricketers who won the world cup at the weekend. Can any of them get into the men's Test side?

But where are the scantily clad pictures of captain Heather Knight, wearing just cricket pads with a bat covering her modesty?

No? Well, here's a 21st century idea. Maybe they just want to be treated as sportswomen and recognised for their achievements on the field of play.

I raise the issue as it seems sexism, particularly in sport, has reared its head again.

It took an age for the powers-that-be to decide women tennis players were worthy of being awarded the same prize money as their male counterparts – despite playing a maximum of three set games rather than five – so it shouldn't take Andy Murray to point out that Sam Querrey was the first MALE US player to reach the Wimbledon semi-final in how-ever many years.

Former champ John McEnroe claimed Serena Williams, one of the greatest there has been, would only be in the top 700 in the men's rankings ("you can't be serious?").

I am all for equality and giving credit where it is due, so if a woman is as good at their job as a man they should be similarly recompensed, this coming at a time when the BBC announces only a third of its 96 highest earners are women.

But they can't have it both ways. Female golfers are apparently angry at a new dress code, introduced by the Ladies' Professional Golf Association which bans them from wearing clothes with plunging necklines and revealing skirts.

Breaching the code could end in a 1,000 dollar fine. So it seems they want to be objectified as well as treated like serious athletes.

Heather Daly-Donofrio, LPG tour communications and operations officer, said: "The dress code requires players to present themselves in a professional manner to reflect a positive image for the game."

Quite right too in my opinion.

Teen magazine Youth Vogue claimed the edict had set women "way back".

But surely, like in all walks of life, a dress code should apply.

Transport minister John Hayes believes so. He has even refused to take questions from any male MP in the House of Commons that does not wear a tie.

So, while I'm all for women being at the top of their profession, I'd rather they be there on merit, for their ability to do their job, rather than a penchant for wearing skimpy revealing outfits.

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Why save unpleasant TV ads for tea time?

I gave up watching daytime television some years ago when I was confined to the chair following a serious operation. The programmes, rather than helping me on the road to recovery, depressed me beyond measure.

Don't get me wrong, I am not an unsympathetic person. But day after day of people screaming and shouting at one another on one channel and someone who is at death's door or in

floods of tears on the other. Films or programmes so old you could almost smell the mothballs.

So these days, after the morning news, our television does not go on again until teatime. But then our problem is with the adverts. We usually watch The Chase and then the evening news while we eat our tea – and that is when they start. All the adverts about spitting blood when you clean your

teeth, medicine to stop your constipation/diarrhoea/heartburn, treatment for head lice, something for smelly armpits/feet, or even something to stop you making the toilet smelly!

Anything unpleasant they save for when you are eating. I am sure it is planned! Pity our favourite programmes are on ITV.

JENNY JAMES
Wordsley

Bid to find long lost relatives

YEARS ago I was tracing my family tree but I seem to have come to a stop.

Perhaps some of your readers could help me find grandchildren of my uncle, who was Henry Thomas Parkes, and his wife Sarah (née Woodhall). They lived in Congreaves Road, Cradley Heath.

The grandchildren are Jean O'Connell (née Bryan), born about 1945 in Rowley Regis, and Barry Bryan, born about 1949, Rowley Regis. There was another grandchild, I think her name was Pat (Patricia), she lived with her grandparents in Congreaves Road, Cradley Heath, while I think the other two grandchildren lived in the Doulton Road area, Rowley Regis.

The grandchildren are the descendants of my late father Mr John Parkes who was Henry Thomas Parkes' brother. I am oping some of your readers can help me. If you have any information to share, please call the Express & Star on 01902 319402.

MRS TAYLOR
(née Parkes)
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Lorry drivers cause tailbacks on hills

MY letters regarding 'happenings' on the motorways regarding lorries have received what I wanted – a response from drivers. What a shame that they did not read my letters properly.

I do not criticise lorry drivers in general. Our driving practice is to drive on the nearside lane, obeying the speed limits, only pulling out to overtake. We do something that is frowned on by the law and flash our headlights to warn overtaking vehicles that it is safe to pull over back into the nearside lane. The majority wiggle their indicators in thanks. This happens whether we are towing our caravan or not. Small lorries do not always co-operate.

But I will repeat what does frustrate all motor way users. Some lorry drivers try to overtake going up slopes when then do not have the speed or power to do so, causing unnecessary tailbacks. This situation is resolved by having uphill sections banned to overtaking vehicles. This is not my law, it is laid down by the people who make the rules. It operates, to my knowledge on parts of the A14 and the M4.

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

HS2 only benefits the well-off

AT last plans have been unveiled for this unwanted project, HS2. We have been told of the projected cost and time scale for completion, but we know that none of these projects is completed on time, nor within budget.

Has anyone, I wonder, considered the cost to those who will be affected by this scheme, or the cost of tickets in order to reach London 25 minutes faster? This is not being built for the general public but only those people with unlimited income or travelling on expenses.

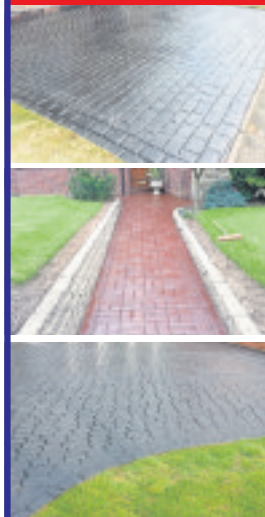
This country is not big enough to justify the expense and disruption which HS2 will cause. Surely the money would be better spent on upgrading what has been left of the rail network following Dr Beeching.

It will probably transpire that it would be cheaper to fly rather than travel by these new trains.

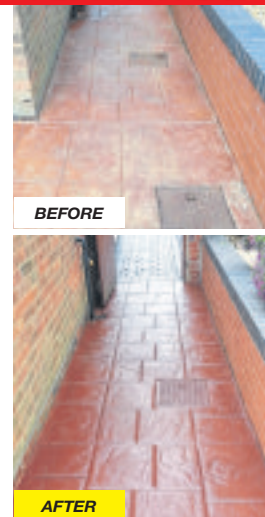
We are told of the employment prospects that this scheme will bring, but where are we to find the skills required?

LEN HALES
Cradley Heath

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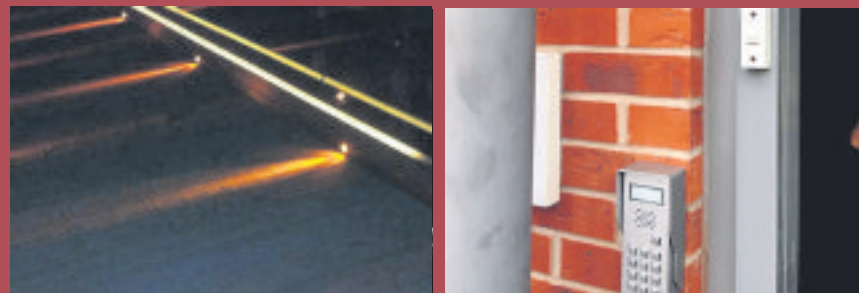
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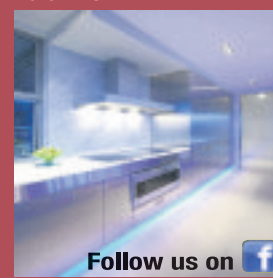
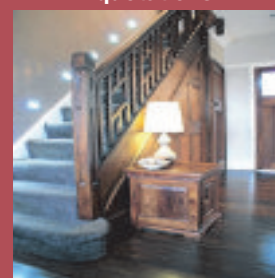
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Darren Gilbert, Alison Bate and Judy Worton fly the flag for an 'edible park' in Walsall



Great heritage – the grand restored entrance gates at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge



Leasowes Park in Halesowen is among those to have been awarded the Green Flag



Ken Smith and Richard Marshall celebrate Sandwell's success after a total of ten awards

Parks flying flag across region

GREEN spaces across the Black Country and Staffordshire have been recognised with the prestigious annual Green Flag Award.

The scheme, which highlights the best green spaces in the world, has handed out more than 40 awards across the Black Country and Mid Staffordshire this year – but Wolverhampton has missed out.

The green flag will be flying at multiple sites across the Black Country after judges were impressed with what they saw.

Prestigious

They are among a record-breaking 1,797 UK parks and green spaces which received the prestigious Green Flag Award or Green Flag Community Award last week for top standards of appearance and upkeep.

Sandwell received 10 awards in total with Barnford Park in Old-

bury, Brunswick Park in Wednesbury, Dartmouth Park, Haden Hill Park, Sandwell Valley Country Park, Sandwell Valley Crematorium, Tipton Cemetery, Victoria Park in Smethwick and Victoria Park in Tipton all picking up the Green Flag Award.

Additionally Haden Hill Park, which is run by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, was a Green Heritage Site Winner.

Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling said: "This is fantastic news

– a big well done to all the staff, volunteers, friends' groups, community organisations and allotment committees. They have all helped Sandwell win these prestigious awards. We also thank everyone who uses our parks and green spaces.

"Despite the pressures on council budgets, we're committed to investing in our parks, cemeteries and crematoriums and improving them for everyone."

In Dudley, Buffery Park, Mary Stevens Park, Priory Park, Silver Jubi-

lee Park, The Leasowes and Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve were all Green Flag Award Winners 2017.

Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge and Priory Park, Dudley, were also Green Heritage Site Winners 2017. The Abbey Road Allotments, run by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, received the Green Flag Community Award Winners 2017.

In Wyre Forest, Brinton Park and Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Gardens were both Green Flag Award Winners.

Council declare war on poverty across Sandwell

SANDWELL Council has vowed to tackle poverty and inequality in a plan to improve the borough over the next decade and to give it a national profile.

The authority has set out 10 ambitions to improve the borough by 2030, through a plan called 'Vision for Sandwell'.

A council report said these aims were developed around key themes, including 'breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and inequality'.

A council summary of the plan said: "In 2030, Sandwell is a thriving, optimistic and resilient community."

"It is where we call home and where we are proud to belong – where we choose to bring up our families, where we feel safe and cared for, enjoying good health, rewarding work, feeling connected and valued in our neighbourhoods and communities, confident in the future, and benefiting fully from a revitalised West Midlands."

Among the aims are raising aspirations and resilience, helping to improve health and safety, improving skills of younger people for work, improving standards of schools and tackling crime.

Transport

Public transport links is the focus of the sixth aim, with the report summarising: "Sandwell will have excellent public transport links to jobs in Birmingham and Wolverhampton, the (Birmingham) airport and the wider West Midlands."

Meanwhile, the seventh aim looks at building more homes and the eighth looks at developing community pride and encouraging residents to keep their neighbourhoods tidy.

In the ninth and tenth aims, council leaders want Sandwell to 'host the industries of the future' and also to boost the national reputation of Sandwell.

The report said: "Sandwell will have a national reputation for getting things done, focussing on what really matters in people's lives and their wider community."

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It's been a nightmare but now we can grieve

'IT'S been an absolute nightmare' - words of the family of Mark Jennens, who was cleared after being wrongly accused of killing his frail elderly mother.

The 40-year-old from Brierley Hill was found not guilty of manslaughter after his 78-year-old Hazel fell on Christmas Eve 2015 following an argument over the festive dinner.

She died at Russells Hall Hospital less than a month later from infection.

Now the family say they just want to grieve for their mother and say the case should never have gone to court.

Mr Jennens sister Tracey Jennens said: "Since the moment mum passed away it has been an absolute nightmare. We have never been allowed to see her. She had numerous post mortems. It has been horrific. We couldn't have the funeral for 14 months.

Upsetting

"We feel like we have had our rights taken away from us. It should never have got this far. There was no public interest in this."

His other sister Dawn Ellis added: "Now we can just get on with grieving for her. We couldn't even have the funeral until this year. It has been so upsetting. She would not have wanted this for Mark."

The case revealed the pair had rowed over how to cook potatoes moments before Mr Jennens pulled his mother up by the arms and tried to frogmarch her to the door, when she collapsed breaking her hip.

It subsequently emerged during his trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court was how the heavy burden of looking after his mother, who had lung cancer



Mark Jennens, third from right, with family and friends after found not guilty

and emphysema, took its own toll on Mr Jennens. He had suffered a breakdown in early 2015 after caring for his mother for more than a decade but when he sought help from social services his mother declined support.

Mr Jennens said: "I can't fault social services. If a person who needs care refuses to participate you are left to drift. It is not social services' fault."

"There needs to be more of a balance struck between the people providing care and the people who need it."

The jury was told Mr Jennens' own mental state declined further, which led to insomnia and him losing his job.

The court heard that by that Christmas 24 years of verbal abuse from his mother had brought him to breaking point. A jury took just one hour and 23 minutes to find him not guilty of manslaughter.

Diane Wake, chief executive of The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said: "This is a very tragic case and our thoughts are with the family. We investigate every death in hospital and these form part of our mortality review process. No clinical issues were raised during our investigation and we would be happy to discuss any concerns the family have with them."

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Nurses recruitment drive results in 95 job offers

A RECRUITMENT drive held at a Birmingham hospital trust led to a staggering 95 conditional job offers to nurses.

More than 150 jobseekers went along to the Nursing Recruitment Open Day, at City Hospital, which was hailed a success by bosses at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust. Throughout the day a total of 110 nurses were interviewed.

Paul Hooton, Deputy Chief Nurse, said: "The day was a huge success and we have successfully handed out 95 conditional job offers. It's been amazing to meet so many enthusiastic nurses who want to work for our Trust. They were impressed with what we have to offer, through from training to staff benefits.

"We hope to build on this successful event, and as a result have more recruitment days lined up over the coming months. It means that we can look at making a significant increase within our nursing workforce.

"What also struck me was the sense of pride and achievement within the nursing workforce throughout the day. There was a real buzz and community spirit amongst everyone."

One of new recruits, Emma Black, who is studying child nursing, said on the day: "I came here to explore what offers you had available. I've been successful on interview, and I can't wait to be part of the team. It's a fabulous, innovative environment and the staff are so lovely. I can't wait to build my career here."

The event saw various specialities showcasing their work across the organisation. They included cardiology, stroke and neurology, apprenticeships and paediatrics. Other departments including the volunteering service, staff benefits and Your Trust Charity had stalls in the Postgraduate Centre, where the event was held.

Ms Gill, speaking at a full meeting of Sandwell Council in which her achievement as MP was celebrated with an ovation from fellow councillors, said: "I want to put on record my thanks to the leader (Sandwell Council leader councillor Steve Eling).

"Without his support and the mentoring opportunities that he gave me, I don't think I would have been in this position now."

MP gives her thanks to council chief

A COUNCILLOR who was elected as an MP in the last general election has paid tribute to Sandwell Council's leader who helped her along the way.

Preet Gill was elected as a Labour MP for the Edgbaston constituency in Birmingham in the June 8, general election. She was a Labour councillor for the St Paul's ward in Sandwell before the election, but has continued that role since becoming an MP.

Ms Gill, speaking at a full meeting of Sandwell Council in which her achievement as MP was celebrated with an ovation from fellow councillors, said: "I want to put on record my thanks to the leader (Sandwell Council leader councillor Steve Eling).

"Without his support and the mentoring opportunities that he gave me, I don't think I would have been in this position now."

Children's next chapter for animal magic



The Reading Challenge launch at Smethwick Library with Sandwell Libraries mascot Woody Bear

THIS year's Summer Reading Challenge is now under way - with Sandwell children urged to help clever 'animal agents' crack a case at their local library over the school holidays.

A special celebration launch event at Smethwick Library saw storytelling, craft activities, a visit from Angie's Animal Antics and a guest appearance from library mascot Woody Bear.

The Summer Reading Challenge asks four to 11-year-olds to borrow

and read any library books during the summer holidays. This year's theme 'animal agents' is based on a detective agency staffed by all kinds of clever animals.

All children must read at least six library books over the summer. They will collect stickers that will help them crack the clues and help the animal agents find out what's really been going on behind the scenes! Tony Ross, the UK's best-selling chil-

dren's illustrator (creator of the Little Princess books and illustrator of the Horrid Henry series) has created this year's artwork.

There's a whole programme of events and activities planned at Sandwell libraries for families over the summer. To find out how to take part, visit your local library, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/libraries, follow @sandwelllibs on Twitter or search 'Sandwell Libraries' on Facebook.

Children told to keep off building sites

CHILDREN have been warned to stay away from building sites over the summer break. A local developer has told children and their parents to be aware of the dangers of building sites as they can be extremely hazardous. Barratt Homes West Midlands has a host of new developments across the Black Country.

Steven Cartwright, Construction Director at Barratt Homes West Midlands, said: "Developers like ourselves are building more new homes at sites all over the country, but until they are completed these places can be dangerous, and with the school summer holidays approaching, children should be told to stay away."

"While we do watch out for youngsters during the day and secure our sites at night, we would like to ask parents to ensure the safety of their children during the holidays, especially if they live near an active building site."

Barratt Homes hosts site visits and holds regular safety talks and for schools close to wherever it is building new homes, to encourage site safety and highlight the hazards of playing on or near construction sites.

Developments include Oak Hill Mews, in Darlaston Road, Wednesbury, and Mercury Place, Wolverhampton.

Brum grunge girl in single release

GRUNGE girl MeMe Detroit is back with a brand new single. The Birmingham rocker and her band release How She Runs via their own Soul-Rock Central Records label, tomorrow, Friday.

MeMe Detroit have a special single launch night planned at The Actress & Bishop pub on the night.

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Lily creates winning design for booklet

THE winner of a competition to design the front cover of a welcome booklet for young patients on a hospital's children's ward has been announced.

Lily Piddington, aged 14, from Holly Hall Academy in Dudley was chosen as the winner by members of the public who cast their vote on The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust's Facebook page.

Lily, who has chosen to study art and design for her GCSEs next year, said she wanted to keep her welcome booklet design for Russells Hall Hospital simple.

She said: "I thought it would be nice to say that doctors aren't

anything to be afraid of no matter what's happened to you.

"I wanted to show the people in my design could be anyone, no matter what race they are."

The design will be used on the front cover of the children's ward welcome booklet and given to every patient who stays on the ward.

Lily added: "My mum and dad were really happy I won the competition."

"They are really proud of me."

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Trust, presented Lily with a £50 Intu Merry Hill voucher. In second place was Michael Ezeji with Amman Ahmed third.



The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust chief executive Diane Wake with winning artist Lily Piddington

MP's anger over litter and weeds

COUNCIL chiefs have been criticised for the state of a borough's streets, verges and open spaces by an MP.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin has urged Dudley Council to reverse its decision to stop cutting the grass and dealing with weeds across the borough.

Mr Austin said he has been contacted by residents from Sedgley, Gornal, Woodsetton, Kate's Hill, Russells Hall and the town centre to complain of the overgrown grass, out of control weeds and litter on the streets.

He said: "I'm from Dudley, I love the place and I'm proud of it but people have contacted me from all over area complaining about the state of the streets, grass verges, roundabouts and open spaces. Look at the islands at Castlegate and Flood Street. They are the gateway to Dudley and the first things visitors see, yet the grass isn't being cut properly, weeds are out of control and litter is being left. How is that going to attract visitors or encourage investment?"

Extension of hours at Lidl approved by the council

AN increase in operating hours at a supermarket have been approved by council bosses despite objections from residents.

Lidl successfully applied to Dudley Council to extend times at its store in Halesowen Road, Netherton, for an extra two hours each day, increasing from 8am to 9pm, up to 7am and 10pm.

Residents accused the store of already flouting its operational hours under its old set times, which included reports of lorries 'thundering' onto the shop's car park at 5am and then leaving their engines running, waking residents.

A spokesman for Lidl said the store was addressing the issue 'with the hauliers directly, to ensure that the agreed delivery windows are being adhered to'.

Flexibility

The spokesman said: "As we experience increased demand, it is necessary for us to have the flexibility in place to adapt our operational availability for the benefit of our customers."

"We were disappointed to hear feedback regarding the gates and out of hours deliveries."

"This is being addressed with the hauliers directly, to ensure that the agreed delivery windows are being adhered to." Council bosses gave the green light at a development scrutiny meeting but said the store must adhere to the conditions that it will not open to the public before 7am and after 10am each day, and deliveries should not take place before 7am and after 9pm on weekdays, before 8am and after 9pm on Saturdays, and before 10am and after 5pm on Sundays.

The store's opening hours – which are different from operating hours – are from

By Jamie Brassington

8am to 8pm on weekdays and Saturdays, and 10am to 4pm on Sundays.

Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews ward councillor Elaine Taylor, who spearheaded a campaign to stop the operating times changing, said: "I find it very hard for them not to have had their request granted. The pressure is there from neighbouring supermarkets."

"Primarily, although Lidl was already breaching the conditions, it wasn't breaching them enough to stop them granting those further operating hours."

A council report into the application to extend the operating times said: "Objections have been received from the occupiers of three dwellings, which front onto Halesowen Road. One objector has now written in three times. An objection has also been received from a ward councillor."

"These make the following points: The store already infringes the opening times – the gates are never padlocked shut and have been left open many times."

"The flouting of the opening times seriously impedes the basic right of neighbours to have quiet time; and large lorries thunder across the car park to the rear of the store before 6am, engines are revved whilst reversing into the loading bay."

Glow on – rare creatures are thriving at beauty spot

A RECORD number of glow-worms have been spotted at a nature reserve near Kingswinford.

A group of volunteers have been spending two months counting glow-worms at Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Highgate Common nature reserve.

During one of the counts, a record 146 glow-worms were recorded. The ancient heathland which covers Highgate Common is a perfect habitat for glow-worms, which are actually a type of bioluminescent beetle.



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1218 months of roadworks to hit the M5

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, July 27, 2017

DRIVERS are facing traffic chaos on the M5 with major restrictions about to come in as part of an 18-month long roadworks scheme.

From the end of the month, north-bound and southbound traffic will be filtered in two lanes onto one side of the carriageway between junctions one and two for West Bromwich and Oldbury – with vehicles crawling at 30mph.

It has also been revealed that traffic will be cut to two lanes heading north-bound from junction three at Hale-sowen to limit the amount of vehicles approaching the roadworks zone and avoid a bottleneck.

The scheme to repair Oldbury viaduct started at Easter, but so far drivers have faced minimal disruption, with the speed limit cut to 40mph but all lanes still open. Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling has warned of chaos on the M5 in the coming months but roads bosses insist the measures are necessary for safety reasons.

Motorists have been warned to prepare for the changes, which are expected to cause significant delays, and consider taking alternative routes. Slip roads will remain open throughout the works.

Highways England senior project manager, Zbigniew Twarowski, said: "This is essential work."

Volunteers needed for reading help

VOLUNTEERS are sought to help children reach their potential and improve their reading skills.

Support includes becoming a 'Beanstalk helper', helping children to learn through reading.

For information, visit www.beanstalkcharity.org.uk or email westmidlandsapplications@beanstalkcharity.org.uk or call 0121 771 2922.

Man admits trying to kill shopkeeper – three years on

Antonia bobs up with fundraiser

A 10-year-old girl provided the centre piece for a fund raising event by having 30 inches of her hair cut off.

Antonia Pratt sat on a chair in the middle of the beer garden at the rear of the Three Cups Inn on Spring Road, Lanesfield on Saturday afternoon.

Scores of parents and children watched and applauded as she had the hair, which had reached to her knees before it was plaited ready for collection, transformed into a shoulder bob by 26-year-old Emma Finch who works at a salon in Kingswinford.

The hair and half of the cash raised at the event, which also included food and music, will go to the Little Princess Trust which provides real hair wigs free of charge to boys and girls across the UK and Ireland who have lost their own hair due to cancer.

Antonia, who lives with her family Woodcross, Coseley, made the gesture after her grandmother lost her life to cancer around Christmas.

She and other members of the Lauren Dion School of Dance had performed at an earlier St George's Day charity event at the pub which raised £2,000, some of which was donated to the Little Princess Trust.

Antonia, who had only had her hair cut three times in her life before, explained: "I thought the world of my nan and wanted to do something in her memory for children."

The event raised at least £500 with the sum split between Little Princess Trust and research into bowel cancer.



Antonia Pratt had 30 inches of hair cut off to raise money for charities

A PARANOID schizophrenic has admitted attempting to murder a shopkeeper by stabbing him 41 times in a 'frenzied' attack – almost three years after the incident.

David Dean was deemed unfit to plead to the charge due to the state of his mental health two years ago. But last week, after being given the all-clear by two psychiatrists, the 45-year-old reappeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court and delivered his guilty plea.

The court heard how Dean leapt over the counter at News and Booze in Bilston and repeatedly stabbed 51-year-old Purshotam Lal. He then fled, leaving his victim, who later required 43 stitches, severely injured.

Dean, currently being treated at the Reaside Hospital near Birmingham, will remain locked up indefinitely in a secure hospital under sentencing by Judge John Wait.

Frenzied

Mr Wait described how Dean's deteriorating mental condition at the time had left him with a 'holy disillusioned' view on reality.

Judge Wait told Dean: "You came to believe that those who run the shop were in truth some form of hostile force troubling your mother. You take it on yourself to seek to kill Mr Lal."

He added: "You had fallen in such a state that you launch this awful, frenzied attack on him."

Ms Heidi Kubik, prosecuting, played CCTV of the incident, at around 9.30pm on December 21, 2014. It showed Dean entering the shop and attracting Mr Lal's attention before stabbing him repeatedly.

He was arrested two days later after being seen acting strangely in East Park.

Mr Jon Roe, defending, said: "Dean is appalled by his behaviour that day."

Industrial link to death of ex-miner

A FORMER miner who worked as a coal cutter during his 35 years down the pit died from an industrial disease, an inquest has ruled.

Kenneth Billingham, of Hilton Road, Featherstone, Wolverhampton had suffered from shortness of breath in recent years but his condition deteriorated markedly in January and he died in New Cross Hospital on July 9.

He had been a coal miner between 1953 and 1988 at three mines, Hilton, Hednesford and Littleton Colliery in Cannock, his daughter Jane Billingham told the inquest at Oldbury.

A post mortem showed that the 78-year-old died from respiratory failure as a result of pneumoconiosis. He had worked at the coalface for most of his career.

Black Country coroner Zafar Siddique concluded that Mr Billingham died of an industrial disease.

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Counselling centre has scooped £10,000 prize

A COUNSELLING centre has scooped £10,000 worth of materials and labour after winning a competition run by a builder's merchants.

Dudley Counselling Centre on Salop Street, Dudley, was crowned regional winner in the Jewson Building Better Communities competition 2017. The money will be spent on demolishing its existing building and building a new one.

Pastor Joe Hayes, chairman of the centre, commented: "We are absolutely delighted to have won £10,000. We have a project to demolish and rebuild our existing centre, which is long overdue. We have plans for the future, to increase counselling for adults and children, and also improve our offering to the homeless people we help."

More than 2,000 entries were submitted and, with the help of Jewson employees and suppliers, the number was narrowed down to a shortlist of 42. A public vote then took place before further judging. In total Jewson has given away £250,000 to building projects and people making a difference in communities.

Dudley Counselling Centre offers support services to residents with issues, including bereavement, financial difficulties, unemployment, loneliness and substance abuse.

I do believe it, now Doreen's at the zoo



Doreen also visited Dudley Zoo's ring-tailed lemurs

DOREEN Tipton was handed the perfect gift for any animal lover – a namesake at Dudley Zoo now a baby deer has been named in her honour.

The comic character went on a trip to the zoo, where she got up close with the lemurs, and staff there also surprised her by revealing they have named the zoo's new baby reindeer after her.

Doreen was given a VIP tour of the Castle Hill attraction, where she filmed scenes for her latest DVD as well as visiting the lemurs and cuddling a tapir and paying a visit to Doreen the reindeer, the first born to mother Bracken and father Ghost.

She said: "I'm really touched. It's actually brought a tear to my eye, as I've never had anything named after me before."

Dudley Zoo is a sponsor of this coming festive season's panto at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Jack and the Beanstalk, in which Doreen stars alongside Gareth Gates and Lisa Riley.

MP marks milestone for apprenticeships

A BLACK Country MP welcomed apprentices to the House of Commons last week to celebrate the 11,000 apprenticeships provided by the UK's aerospace, defence, security and space industries.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin welcomed 100 apprentices, including Thomas Connors from Sedgley who works at UTC in Wolverhampton. They were in Parliament to show the contribution apprentices make to high-skill manufacturing industries, and the world-leading technologies apprentices are working to develop.

The apprentices were from some of Britain's leading aerospace, defence, security and space companies at an event organised by ADS, the trade organisation for companies in the UK aerospace, defence, security and space sectors.

Mr Austin said: "It was great to meet Thomas and other apprentices from the Black Country. We need to make education and skills our country's number one priority."

Travellers' transit site will be 'away from residential areas'

A TEMPORARY travellers' site to tackle illegal camps across Dudley borough would be built away from residential areas, says council boss Patrick Harley.

Dudley chiefs are currently looking at areas to build such a site in the borough, in the wake of a series of camps

which have required police to evict travellers.

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley says a temporary site would help to reduce 'incursions' in the borough and having such a site gives police and councils greater powers to tackle illegal land invasions.

It comes as police evicted more than 30 caravans spread across three sites in Brierley Hill on July 5, which left

Dudley Council with the bill for a major clean-up operation.

"Officers are trying to find one," said Councillor Harley. "We need to identify a couple of areas and put them out to consultation. But a temporary travellers' site needs to be away from residential areas. In a lot of local authorities that have them, there is a 70 per cent reduction on illegal incursions."

Deadline approaches for art competition

THE deadline is fast approaching for artists in Dudley and Walsall to put forward their submissions for an art prize. The Dawn Jones Art award invites people with experience of mental health to create artwork.

Entrants must submit their work by Monday (July 31) for a chance to win one of two £100 prizes, plus exhibition time in Walsall and Dudley.

The competition was set up by Maureen Jones in memory of her daughter, Dawn Jones, who committed suicide in 2005 at the age of 25 following a long battle with depression.

Fourteen shortlisted entries will be exhibited in August at Forest Arts Centre in Walsall and two winners will go on long-term display. Visit dwmh.nhs.uk/artprize

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MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

OVER the years there have been more than 80 bicycle manufacturers in Wolverhampton. One of the largest was Viking Cycles, famous for lightweight racing bikes. The company was founded at 5 Wolverhampton Road, Heath Town by Victor Davies, in 1908. It expanded to larger premises in Broad Street in 1928. They opened a shop on Princess Street in 1934, and further works down Princess Alley the following year. It became a limited liability company in 1939, Viking Cycles Ltd. After the war further premises were opened in St Peter's Square, and by now they were making 2,000 bicycles a year, most notably the lightweight racing bikes, and decided to form their own team. One of the greatest racers of the day, Bob Thom, was recruited to manage and ride for the team which started in 1948, and became an immediate force in road racing, winning many major races.

Production increased rapidly, with up to 1,250 dealers across the country, and by 1963 they were making 20,000 bikes a year with a workforce of 70. By then various premises had been consolidated occupying the much larger Merridale Works in Russell Street, but soon afterwards there was something of a slump in the trade. The company, now run by Ron Davies, Victor's son, survived for a while with a revolutionary children's bike, which grew telescopically, with the child, but in 1967 Viking had to cease production. The company was bought by two Americans who moved production to Londonderry, where the bikes were just assembled, with bought-in components. The Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre has a growing collection of Wolverhampton-built two wheelers, including a Viking racing bicycle, and they would like to know the colours of the Viking Racing Team, to recreate the kit.



The site of the shop in Princess Street

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Now Quarry Bank is looking blooming lovely

QUARRY Bank is bursting with colour in a bid to secure a coveted ‘in bloom’ title.

Businesses and residents have come together to create a spectacular scene on the High Street and in its main park and church.

The area is bidding to go one better after taking the silver award in the prestigious competition last year.

Mary Sparks, secretary of the Friends of Stevens Park in Quarry Bank, said: “I think the judges were impressed. For the first time this year the park is included in Quarry Bank in Bloom and we’re

very pleased about that. Most of the shops in the High Street have got involved and presented some sort of floral display. The church congregation should be very pleased with their efforts, it looks beautiful.”

The judges were also informed of plans to revamp the park as part of a bid for Heritage Lottery funding. A community garden and pond will be added and the football pitch and footpaths resurfaced in a bid to make the area more attractive for families. The park’s historic White House building will be restored and the bandstand refurbished as part of the project.



Friends of Stevens Park chairman David Sparks, centre, with judges Paul Ash and Graham Redfern

Hard choice faced over jobs or the countryside

SHOULD the green belt be built on to develop new industries which are needed in the Black Country over the next 20 years?

That question’s being asked as it’s revealed that councils need to find 300 hectares – or more than 300 rugby pitches – of land for industries and businesses in order to boost the economy and employment opportunities by 2036.

A key question of public consultation, launched by the Black Country Core Strategy which is run by the councils of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, is should any green belt be released to make up the space?

This is just an option at this stage but the question is being asked as part of the study.

The core strategy is a planning and regeneration proposal for the whole of the region. It also looks at where homes should be built.

People living in the Black Country are being asked to share their views by September 8, when the consultation closes.

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: “This document will shape the Black Country for a generation and it’s absolutely critical that people have their say on it.

Grow

“Making the most of brownfield land is a high priority for us and one of Dudley Council’s main objectives in our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority. However, clearly at some point in the coming decades we are going to run out of these kind of sites as our population and our economy continues to grow.

“That’s why we are launching a consultation, along with the other three Black Country authorities, to enable people to have their say. It’s important people tell us what they think and we would urge them to get in touch.”

The Black Country Core Strategy outlines how many homes need to be built and how to plan for the number of extra jobs needed for a growing population. It also decides where homes and businesses should be located. The consultation document says nearly 80,000 homes need to be built in the Black Country before 2036. It says sites have already been earmarked for around



Councillor Patrick Harley

60,000. But new plots of land need to be found for nearly 22,000 properties.

The original document was launched six years ago and covers the period up to 2026. The public consultation will be on a review of the document to take it up to 2036.

Feedback from the consultation will be analysed by council bosses before an updated version of the plans are put out for consultation next year.

Residents are also being asked to give their views regarding where housing should be built, as part of the Black Country Core Strategy’s public consultation.

There is a ‘call for sites’, as part of the public consultation, where people can put forward areas of land they feel may be suitable for development.

The information from the consultation will be collated and used to produce a proposed review document, which will again go out to consultation next year.

People can find out more about the consultation and take part at blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk.

Leaflets will also be available from libraries across the Dudley borough, or they can be requested by calling (01384) 814136.

Fanfare for a rock keyboard legend

FANS of rock star Keith Emerson can enjoy an evening dedicated to the late musician in Birmingham.

Keith Emerson: A Musical Celebration Of Life will feature keyboard wizard Rick Wakeman and a symphony orchestra at Symphony Hall tomorrow night (Friday).

The evening will pay tribute to Emerson, a keyboard legend himself, as well as the music of the powerhouse trio Emerson, Lake and Palmer.

Emerson first found fame with the band Nice in the late 1960s before forming ELP with bassist Greg Lake from King Crimson and drummer Carl Palmer from Atomic Rooster in 1970. They had several hit albums and a hit single with Fanfare For The Common Man.

Others set to appear include Californian pianist Rachel Flowers, French musician Thierry Eliez and ELP tribute act Noddy’s Puncture. See thsh.co.uk for details. The event is raising money for Care After Combat. Emerson, 71, committed suicide last year in California.

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Ever tried a vintage look in the bathroom?

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



WE'VE been talking previously about adding some vintage style to various rooms in the home but never before about creating an old-fashioned look in a bathroom.

So this week I thought we would do just that and see what might be available in the saleroom that would be appropriate.

It all depends on personal choice and whether a particular theme is to be adhered to – a seaside or nautical one, for example.

This is very easy to achieve, there are many vintage items that are perfect, from little painted wooden ships to glass “witch balls” (fisherman’s floats).

The ocean “blue and white” theme can be added to with numerous items, from Cornishware storage jars to framed collections of sea shells.

A traditional vintage look works in any bathroom, in older homes and contemporary ones, with pieces fitting in perfectly with the standard modern suites.

It is lovely to be able to incorporate an old roll-top bath but this isn’t always practical as it does tend to take up quite a lot of space.

But the period look can be achieved with a number of other items that can easily be picked up at auction.

Old wooden towel stands (below) are very affordable, and can be painted to fit in with a colour scheme if the wood is scruffy, and swing mirrors look good on a window-ledge.

Free-standing mirrors are great if you have the room and old wash-stand sets fit in with any bathroom design, especially if you have a vintage wash-stand too.

Antique perfume bottles look lovely displayed on a shelf and you can easily pick up old china soap dishes.

Bathroom walls can be very much part of the

style theme, look out for vintage mirrors and framed adverts for soap and bath salts (top).

In terms of storage, vintage steamer trunks would be nice for towels and wooden boxes stacked together can be used for smaller items.

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.
- The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, on Tuesday, August 1. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day.
- New sale bidders are advised to attend the sale-room early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
- Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

It’s already time to look to the sales for winter



Mustard yellows with jade blues

IT’S July and most of us have not yet ventured on our summer holidays but the high street clothing stores are preparing for their sales, the end of the summer stock lines and the integration of the autumn/winter styles.

Now is the time to buy your beachwear, bikinis and pretty sundresses. Even if you store them for next year’s good weather (hopefully!) it is worth the shopping trip for bargains.

I’ve never been certain that it is right to begin the sales before our summers or winters are in full swing and most of us have not considered buying our newest wardrobe needs. This only creates more difficulties with brands selling enough product each season and ultimately having to reduce the price and affect their margins and profits. Some designers are considering this and showing their collections at varied times in the season. Benefit while you can!

We are in for a glorious autumn winter season of colours and trends with delightful combinations of colours and prints. Mustard yellows, mixed with deep jades and blues, sable browns, mahogany and dark terracotta,

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



deep dark country forest greens and olives, soft vintage ice cream pinks and burgundies and graphite greys.

Prints have dark backgrounds, influenced by oriental and eastern cultures, topped with dark midnight florals and eerie wilderness prints. Graphic pencil and line drawings, detailed and artistic artwork and graphic broken florals, computer generated and block combinations of colour. In contrast, there will be shiny metallics and high-tech fabrics, cosmic, smart and sensory textured effects.

Sharp tailoring with sleek lines and crisp shoulders, accentuated waists and clever pattern cutting with belts and button detail, skirts or trousers, sombre business colours.

Seventies fine knits and ruffles make a comeback, full sleeve gathered floral blouses, frilly dresses and deep v necklines, flared trouser hems, high waistlines and short fit-

ted jumpers, even collars worn over round necklines.

Soft draping leather, smooth aniline finishes and chamois softness in dresses, skirts, jackets and trousers. Natural colours.

Dresses are the “order of the day” liquid fabrics with fluted hems and smooth shapely cuts, body hugging and delicate.

Coats are continental quilts, oversized and roomy, warm and cosy, wadded and quilted or fluffy and cuddly furs, designed to feel cocooned in comfort.

A strange time to be considering your winter wardrobe, but at least be prepared for the trends that will be on offer and your preferences, there will be something to suit all personalities and body shapes. Let’s hope the good weather lasts a little longer and winter delays it’s entrance but enjoy the excitement of a new season and the clothing choices that offers, buy early to avoid disappointment or wait for the inevitable early sales to enjoy your autumn/winter wardrobe.

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Some people take out loans to meet the costs of making their wedding day special



It can all end happily ever after – if you make moves to keep your costs down

Don’t let rising costs ruin your big wedding day



It’s the day when brides are in the spotlight

BIG bills can ruin your big day – here’s how to not let wedding costs get the better of you.

Wedding season is here again, and while it’s a happy time for couples and their guests, it can also prove very costly.

Here’s how the bills pile up – and how you can make clever cutbacks without it leading to wedding woes.

HOW COSTS MOUNT UP

The average cost of tying the knot is now £8,000, according to a survey of married UK couples from Nationwide Building Society – with 11 per cent splashing out more than £20,000.

With big costs to cover, some couples could be tempted into debt. Website MoneySuperMarket recently said it has seen a jump in people applying for wedding loans – including applications for over £20,000.

Nationwide also puts the average cost of being a wedding guest at around £400 – of which roughly £150 is spent on the stag or the hen party, and £250 goes towards the ceremony itself.

WHAT’S THE FIRST TO GO?

Couples looking to cut the cost of their wedding may want to consider how those who are already married successfully

Report by Liza Radley

trimmed their budgets. Nationwide’s survey found the wedding dress was the most likely item to be “downgraded” to save money, followed by the number of guests, the invitations, the venue and the food.

Many high street stores now sell wedding dresses, or brides on a budget could go for a more vintage look by trawling second hand and charity shops, or auction websites for a bargain.

When it came to the aspects of the wedding most likely to be ditched altogether, canapés came out on top, followed by favours, cars, suit hire and a paid-for bar.

Perhaps for some people, having homemade canapés with a personal touch, rather than ditching them altogether, and swapping champagne for cheaper forms of bubbly, could be a compromise.

WHAT IF YOU CAN’T AVOID GOING INTO DEBT?

If you can’t see any way of avoiding getting into debt, at the very least it’s important to compare loans to get the best deal.

Kevin Pratt, a consumer affairs expert at MoneySuperMarket, says: “As with any borrowing, it’s also wise to set a schedule following the wedding to make sure you can repay it in good time.”

COUPLES TRY TO KEEP GUESTS’ COSTS DOWN

While trying to keep a tight rein on their own budgets, nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of brides and grooms actively consider how to reduce costs for guests, according to research from American Express. It found the top three ways brides and grooms try to reduce costs are: choosing a venue within a close distance to family and friends to reduce travel costs, selecting a stag or hen do that won’t be too pricey, and asking guests not to buy gifts.

HOW THE COSTS FOR GUESTS CAN BE EASED FURTHER

Here are some tips from American Express for couples planning a cost-conscious wedding for their guests:

:: Alert international guests early. Once you know the date, ensure any guests flying in to attend the wedding know as early as possible, so they can secure the best travel deals.

:: Negotiate room deals. Many accommodation providers will provide a discount on rooms if you make a block booking.

:: Consider the venue carefully. If you don’t want your guests to break the bank, look at the price of drinks your venue is providing to ensure there are some budget-friendly options.

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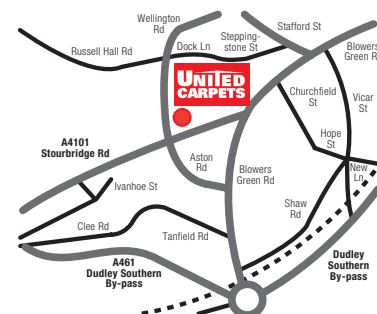
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Brier Fair gets them dancing in the streets



Natasha Zackarzewski and Jack Lowe re-enact Dirty Dancing in the indoor market at Brierley Hill during the Brier Fair

THOUSANDS visited a high street fair as part of the Black Country Festival celebrations.

Brierley Hill's High Street was hosting the Brier Fair.

The day's festivities, which took place on Saturday between 11am and 4pm, included fairground rides and lots of stalls and street entertainment.

Organiser Steve Edwards, chairman of the Black Country Festival, said thousands had descended on the town centre for the event.

He added: "It went really really well,

it was ram-packed. It exceeded all our expectations.

"We had fairground rides, water boat rides for the kids and lots of stalls put on by people in the local community selling their local wares. The market was also buzzing.

"It was the first time the Black Country Festival has had an event on Brierley Hill High Street. It was organised by the festival in conjunction with Dudley Council. This was all about bringing the town back to life and allow the High Street to flourish. It was attended by the local community and run by the local community."

Asked about this year's Black Country Festival was going, Mr Edwards said: "This year has been the best year ever. We are seeing great attendances at all our events and it just seems to be getting better and better."

Floating

Meanwhile, there will be more fun in Brierley Hill this weekend when the 'floating market' returns.

The Merry Hill Floating Market will run along the canal embankment between Greens Bridge and Daniels Land Bailey Bridge from tomorrow (Friday) to next Monday.

Police seeking axeman

THIS man, pictured right, was being sought by police after allegedly attacking a reveller with an axe on Stourbridge High Street.

The suspect's photo was taken in a pub shortly before a fight broke out outside.

Police officers investigating the incident say that the suspect left the premises and then returned armed with an axe, before attacking someone with the weapon. The victim's injuries were not known.

West Midlands Police said the suspect was spotted running along Stourbridge High Street with an axe as revellers left local pubs.

The force said that it had recovered the axe following the violence, which happened at around 12.50am on April 23.

Anyone with further information on the violent incident, or who knows the identity of the man in the picture, is urged to call police officers on the non-emergency 101 number, quoting crime number 20DY/106326C/17.

Information can also be left anonymously by calling the Crimestoppers charity on 0800 555111 or searching for the crimestoppers-uk.org website.



Man sought by police

Liam is first winner in tribute to Joseph



Guitarist Liam Cook with Joseph Tennant's parents, Claire and Paul, and Gill Coldicott, head of Stourbridge College

A YOUNG musician has become the first winner of a college award launched in memory of a former student.

Stourbridge College student Liam Cook was presented with the Joseph Tennant Award for outstanding achievement. The 18-year-old guitarist was chosen after making exceptional progress on his music performance course. Liam, who plans to continue his studies at university,

hopes of achieving his dream of working in the music industry. He, said: "I've been playing guitar since I was nine. It's a huge honour to win this award"

The Joseph Tennant Award was set up this year in memory of the Stourbridge College music student killed in a car accident in Bristol four months after completing his course in November 2015.

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Sex pest loses his sentence appeal

A RUGBY fan from Stourbridge who repeatedly exposed himself when apparently approaching female pedestrians for directions in a Welsh seaside town has failed to have his sentence reduced.

Jeremy Mark Randon, of Heather Drive, Stourbridge, spread panic among passers-by while prowling around in his car in the Welsh seaside town of Tywyn in October 2015.

Among those the 41-year-old exposed himself to was a 14-year-old girl.

The South African-born rugby fan, who had just watched his team play in the Rugby World Cup, had been drinking and 'was depressed', the court heard.

He had approached five females in total, all while 'naked from the waist down', London's Appeal Court heard.

Randon had been handed a three-year community order at Mold Crown Court in December 2015. He had admitted four counts of exposure and engaging in sex-

ual activity in the presence of a child. He was sentenced for drink-driving, being banned from the road for a year and ordered to sign on the sex offenders' register for five years.

By Doug Wootton

A 16-year-old girl described how Randon emerged from his car, naked below the waist and touching himself in an intimate place while talking to her.

Randon's case reached the Appeal Court as he had challenged his sentence, claiming it was far too harsh.

But Judge Deborah Taylor QC said: "This application is wholly without merit." The judge, sitting with Lord Justice Treacy and Mrs Justice Russell, concluded: "This application is refused."

Pensioner is rescued after car hits post box



The crash in Hagley Road, Stourbridge
Picture: West Midlands Police

A PENSIONER was taken to hospital when his car ended up on its side after smashing into a post box in Stourbridge on Sunday.

The accident happened on the busy Hagley Road in Stourbridge at around 2pm.

Firefighters used a ladder to get the driver, a man in his 70s, out of the Hyundai, which suffered significant damage. He was taken to Russells Hall Hospital with minor injuries.

The red post box was knocked onto its side, with the impact forcing its lid to come off. The car also hit a street sign and a bollard before coming to rest on its side.

Hagley Road was closed while firefighters worked to get the man out of the car. West Midlands Fire Service spokesman Matthew Smith said: "The incident involved one car on its side after a collision with a post box and street furniture. One male was removed from the vehicle. He was transferred to hospital by ambulance."

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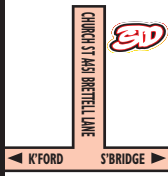
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Great Days Out

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Visit Nickelodeon Land at the Pleasure Beach

And if you fancy a trip up north, then what better place to be than by the seaside and visiting than Blackpool Pleasure Beach?

The 42-acre site is perfect for a fun-packed day trip out and its Nickelodeon Land has 12 rides you can venture onto and have a great time.

This year, PAW Patrol members Chase and Marshall will be out and about with Nickelodeon Land's Skye.

The gang will be out to meet and greet guests on the Nickelodeon Land stage.

Rides will open at 10am and the earliest ride normally closes at about 5pm.

You can buy Unlimited Ride Wristbands from at least £18 for children when they're booked 10 days or more in advance for an off-peak day.

If they're booked later, the prices will increase.

Adult wristbands apply for children aged 12 and over and junior wristbands are used for children younger than that.

Height restrictions do apply but the wristbands allow unlimited access to the rides.

For more information visit www.blackpoolpleasurebeach.com/prices

Meet Peppa Pig at theme park



Meet Peppa Pig at Paultons Park

If you're visiting the south coast and have small children, the best place for a day out with them could be Paultons Park, near Romsey.

It is one of the UK's highest rated theme parks and it is the only one in the country to have received the Travellers' Choice Award from TripAdvisor for two years in a row.

The theme park has benefited from the launch of the Jurassic-themed attraction, Lost Kingdom.

Amongst the attractions, Peppa Pig World has seven rides and kids can enjoy indoor fun at George's Spaceship Playzone. Those rides include Peppa's Big Balloon Ride and Miss Rabbit's Helicopter Flight.

Families can also book Peppa's Early Play and Ride Pass. They are available on selected dates and you must pre-book, but they give you the opportunity to meet Peppa Pig and George personally between 9am and 10am. Normally the park opens at 10am and closes at 5.30pm.

Visit www.paultonspark.co.uk/attractions/peppa-pig-world/

Summer full of fun in store for thrillseekers of all ages

Take advantage of the great summer weather with a trip to one of the region's several leisure parks.

One of the country's most popular, Alton Towers, boasts rides suitable for all ages and it was visited by nearly two million people last year.

Younger visitors can take their parents to the park's new live and interactive show at The Furchester Hotel.

Join favourites Phoebe, Funella, Furgus, Elmo and Cookie Monster and make your way through the hotel's famous revolving doors before you're welcome with furry arms into the hotel.

The show will see the hotel prepare for the exciting arrival of Chick Swagger and you'll be able to sing and dance along to the rock-a-doodle do hit, Tail Feather Shake.

If that's not for you, then there's also a chance to join Kyan, Xuli, Lars and Foz to go on a Go Jetters global adventure and join other little thrill seekers fly around the world in a Vroomster. They'll launch from the Jetpad to help to find the Grandmaster Glitch.

Postman Pat's Parcel Post ride will also give kids the chance to take control of his van on his delivery route through Greendale.

Pick up the right parcels to deliver to Greendale's favourite residents as they drive along.

More thrill-seeking theme park fans will be able to enjoy white knuckle rides including Galactica, Nemesis, Oblivion, Rita, The Smiler or The Blade.

Galactica is still there to thrill, just over a year since it was rebranded and modified, having formerly been the theme park favourite Air. You will ride along it for 840 metres and reach a top speed of 47mph.

Exhilaration

It features an 840-metre-long (2,760 ft) track, reaches a top speed of 75 km/h (47 mph), and debuted a dedicated virtual reality experience.

Astronaut Chris Hadfield said earlier this year about his time on Galactica: "Having seen this for real, it certainly makes the exhilaration of space travel possible for people that would never otherwise get to see such amazing sights."

There is still a great variety of rides to go on at Drayton Manor – ranging from family rides, including its 4D cinema, its big wheel and its carousel, to its thrill rides including the favourite Apocalypse and the newer ride Accelerator. Drayton Manor promises that children on their first-ever rollercoaster will be thrilled by going on it, along with other more experienced riders.

The coaster begins with a big drop before everyone on board speeds around the twisting track at high speed. Seconds later, you do the whole ride again – but backwards.

Its Air Race ride will also leave your head spinning. Climb into the ride's plane and take off for a mind-bending journey through the skies.

But it's a bit of a scary ride – you'll be turned 360 degrees, swung upside down and towards the ground.

If that's not your kind of thing, then its zoo and a visit to the kids' Thomas Land may be in order.

And the one of the best safari parks in the country will also be visited by thousands of people over the next few months.

West Midlands Safari Park is home to a herd of southern white rhinos, which is one of its most popular sights.

That is not to mention the zebras, the prized Ankole cattle, ellipsen waterbuck, ostriches and the eland, which is the largest of all antelope species. You can also see the giant Asian water buffalo and the other smaller ones including the tiny blackbuck.

The world's rarest deer is also there, along with the endangered barasingha and the armoured greater one-horned rhino.

If you don't mind going a little further afield,



Thomas Land at Drayton Manor Park features a whole host of rides for the youngsters based on the popular TV series



Plenty to see and do at West Midlands Safari Park



Younger guests can visit The Furchester Hotel at Alton Towers



Alton Towers boasts a host of rollercoasters for daredevils



Legoland Windsor is a great day out if you don't mind travelling

you could take a trip to Legoland Windsor.

The country's first ever 4D, hand-gesture enabled ride was launched just last month and lets people on it experience a new world of ninjas.

People go through the stages of Zane's Temple Build, Kai's Spinners and Cole's Rock Climb. Then once tackling the activities and practising their Spinjitzu skills, guests are prepared to enjoy the ride.

The ride uses heat, smoke and wind along with hand gestures and you'll be able to throw fire balls, shock waves, ice and lightning using just their hands.

Up to four people can sit in each ride and their ninja skills will be scored battling against snake tribes, skeleton ghosts and the King of the Skulkuns. By the end visitors will face The Great Devourer – a giant serpent who can only be defeated by working together and demonstrating the best Spinjitzu moves.

More than 20 Lego models can be found in Ninjago World including two five-foot guardian dragons built from nearly 78,000 bricks protecting the entrance, a model of Master Wu and the LEGO NINJAGO heroes themselves.

The first people to be allowed to go on the ride included celebrities such as the Oscar-nominated actress Rosamund Pike, panel show regular Romesh Ranganathan and Liberty X singer, Michelle Heaton.

The new Legoland Discovery Centre in Birmingham will be open by next year. The attraction will be open in the Barclaycard Arena and will be aimed at children who are between three and 10. It will include themed play areas, interactive rides, party rooms for birthdays, a 4D cinema and the popular Miniland area found in every Legoland Discovery Centre and LEGOLAND theme

Stay independent with help to get your home adapted

Commercial feature

Dudley Council is offering help to Dudley borough residents who need to adapt their homes to better meet their needs.

Anyone who is struggling with daily life in their home can ask for help. If a member of the household of any age is having difficulties bathing, getting upstairs, even getting into the home, help is on offer to adapt the property to better meet these needs.

Dudley Home Improvement Service, part of Dudley Council, offers the adaptations package. Grants are available to pay for adaptations, along with an adaptations package of advice and practical support. This consists of an expert recommendation, support to design and build the adaptation from technical officers and council approved builders. All work is overseen by the council, so there is no hassle and no stress to people.

Home adaptations for independence are available to people who own their own homes or are private rental tenants. Council tenants can already request adaptations to their homes through the council. The aim is to help people stay independent in their homes. Typical adaptations include handrails, stair rails, ramps, level access showers, stair lifts, through-the-floor lifts, even home extensions to provide extra sleeping or bathing facilities.

An initial assessment by an occupational therapist will take place and this will establish the type of adaptation needed to suit a



Anyone who is struggling should ask for help from the adaptations service

person's needs and to help them stay independent and safe in their home.

The service offers adaptations to people of any age. Full grant funding is always provided for adaptations needed for children under 18.

Alan Lunt, Dudley Council's strategic director of place said: "Anyone who is finding it difficult to manage in their home, or has a member of their

household who is struggling should ask for help from the adaptations service. Lots of support is on offer, along with grant funding to pay for home adaptations for many people. It's all about keeping people safe and independent in their homes and making life more liveable."

Contact Dudley Home Improvement Service on 0300 555 0055.

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Make your home work for you

Home adaptations for independence

Struggling in your home? Are you or a member of the family having difficulties bathing, getting upstairs, or even getting into your home?

If you are a homeowner or private rental tenant and need assistance with adapting your property to better meet the needs of a member of your household, we can help.

Dudley Council offers grants to pay for adaptations*, uses reputable, approved tradespeople and can arrange all works for you.

*Dependant on criteria

- Level access showers
- Door widening
- Stairlifts
- Ramps
- Extensions

DUDLEY HOME IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

21 Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, July 27, 2017

Great Days Out

Zip wire thrill for adrenaline fans



Take on the longest Zip Wire in Europe

If you watch one of Zip World's online videos, you're likely to be either repelled or enthralled by the prospect of undertaking one of their challenges.

Take some time at the Penrhyn Slate Quarry, near Bethesda in North Wales, and have a go on Zip World Velocity.

It's the fastest of its kind in the world and the longest in Europe so if you're up for a personal challenge, this could well be one. You'll be able to enjoy the view of other adrenaline-seeking zippers and/or take a trip on one of Zip World's trucks.

You'll be zipping over what was once the world's largest working slate quarry. Its pit is over 1.5 kilometres long and it is 370 metres deep. At its height its owners employed nearly 3,000 staff; it's still Britain's largest but now it employs about 200 people. Since then it's been superseded by other quarries in China, Spain and the United States.

If that's a bit daunting, visit the spectacular Conwy Valley and Zip World's Fforest complex.

It's an idyllic woodland and visitors can enjoy a journey through the canopy of trees on a Zip Safari or bounce around in the Treetop Nets area.

And after all that adventure, why not relax, re fuel and watch the action from Zip World Fforest Caffi?

White water fun on raging rapids



Take on the rapids for yourselves this summer

Experience the thrill of real white water rafting on a true Welsh mountain river at the National White Water Centre!

Set on the River Tryweryn in the unspoilt natural environment of South Snowdonia, the centre was the first rafting venue in the UK and remains its most popular; dam-controlled river levels mean the same raging rapids all year round – perfect for summer rafting!

Take on the rapids for yourselves this summer with a range of exciting white water activities ideal for action-packed birthday parties and special occasions, group outings or family days out.

The centre caters for all ages from 10 years old, no experience is necessary but a sense of adventure essential!



Take aim on the firing range to see who is the best shot in your group



Have a go on a quad bike – youngsters are welcome too

Make time for an adventure at outdoor activity centres

For some people, the summer is an opportunity to take on activities you might not be able to have done earlier in the year.

Why not take advantage of that and have some fun at The Edge Adventure Activity Centre in Much Wenlock?

It caters for a massive range of activities. You can see how you get on riding on a Segway, which is quickly becoming the world's fastest growing adventure hobby.

Once you have mastered how to balance, you will be zooming around The Edge's purpose-designed course in the Shropshire countryside.

It is an eco-friendly way of travelling around and is fun too.

The Edge warns that it 'might be unnerving' at first but that after that initial worry it really is for everyone: all you have to do is lean forward to drive and lean back to slow down or stop. It is a thrill no one will forget.

The Edge runs a fleet of seven Segways, which means you'll be able to enjoy taking them out for a spin with your friends or colleagues if you want to book them together.

Skill

But be aware if you're thinking of taking the kids along, that you must be at least 10 years old to ride a Segway.

If that's not your bag, try your hand at clay pigeon shooting. The range is based in open fields and it will test your skill, patience and accuracy against other people in your group.

You might be a little worried about the impact of the noise of the weapons or the recoil you might suffer from them. There's no need to be. The guns are designed to reduce any impact that might impact on the shooters. They're also fitted with silencers which reduce the noise from the fire arms. If you choose The Edge, you'll be given fully qualified instructors, who will guide you along the activity.

Find out whether you've got a great shot by trying that out – or taking a risk on the sniper pellet range. You'll take a few practice shots then you'll be given the task of trying to shoot down a series of mechanical sensor targets.

The Edge has an Olympic digital timer system which starts when the shooter hits the first target and doesn't finish until the last target has been shot down. The system allows accurate competition between group



Thrillseekers can have a go on a zip wire at many of the activity centres across the region

members and you'll use 10-pellet magazines in a high-powered BSA weapon, which will deliver accurate results.

For more information on The Edge and any other activities it offers, visit www.theedgeadventure.co.uk

Alternatively, if you want to spend more time outside, get yourselves down to Go Ape! in Cannock Chase.

Set in the smallest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the country, the Staffordshire site has the longest combined length of crossings of any Go Ape! course in the country. It measures 1,500 metres in tree-to-tree crossings and is a physical course.

You can take two to three hours in the trees and take on zip wires, Tarzan swings, rope ladders and a number of obstacles and crossings, which is something for the whole family.

If that's not too close to you, you can go to other courses across the Midlands. They

include other courses in the Wyre Forest in Worcestershire, Buxton in Derbyshire, Sherwood in Nottinghamshire and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire.

If you don't mind going further afield then you could take a trip on the Crocky Trail, near Chester. The people at the trail are always keen for families or friends to drop down there for a few hours.

Challenges

There are a number of rides and the trail and challenges mean it is the perfect way for families to have some quality family time and exercise too.

The adventure is a mile long and you will run along the trail scrambling through trees, crooked bridges and over the fast-flowing Crocky stream.

And there's also, a bit closer to home perhaps, another option if you fancy visiting Oakerwood Leisure, near Leominster in Herefordshire. The centre is set in 175 acres

of woodland and is also home to two lakes. But if you're doing activities, each one is based in its own exclusive area so you'll not be caught up in crowds.

And the centre has been running for 27 years, which means it says it really knows what people want and need when they go out to have a fun day out.

If you want to stay for a little bit longer, then you can make the most of a stay by taking a place in its Glamping Villages, which are set in secluded spots overlooking Welsh mountains. They're designed to give a feel of nature without taking away too many luxuries you'd enjoy if you were at home.

Oakerwood Leisure says they're perfect for stag or hens weekends, corporate camps, sports tours and families. They have electric lighting and heaters to ensure you're cosy in the winter months.

Each pod sleep up to eight people in bunk beds so all you need to bring are sleeping bags, duvets and pillows.

Man ran in front of coach to kill himself

A FOOTBALL coach took his own life after running in front of a coach carrying children on the M5 at Great Barr, an inquest heard.

Nicholas Mowl, aged 41, had been troubled by a mystery trauma, believed to be related to his health. The week before his death, the retired semi-professional footballer had been due to return to Australia to work, but failed to make the flight, saying he was ill.

The coach, which had taken pupils to Grove Primary in Handsworth, Birmingham, after a day at Kingsbury Water Park on May 16, had been diverted due to the closure of the Aston Expressway following the discovery of an unexploded Second World War bomb nearby.

Driver Gurdip Bagree, of Broadway West, Walsall, described seeing a black Vauxhall Insignia pull on to the hard shoulder and park abruptly before the driver jumped out about two coach lengths away from the Aston Travel coach.

Mr Bagree told the hearing: "Alarm bells did start ringing. The driver looked back and made eye contact, then he ran in front of my

By Marion Brennan

vehicle. It was so sudden, I had no chance to react."

Pc Stuart Thorpe, who investigated the incident, said the Vauxhall's engine was still running when police got to the scene. The coach's windscreen was smashed, but no-one onboard had been hurt. A post mortem showed Mr Mowl, from Solihull, who worked for sports agency Omnisports, died from multiple injuries.

According to his parents, who did not attend, Mr Mowl had alluded to 'something that had happened in his life', possibly the diagnosis of a terminal illness, said Pc Thorpe. Black Country coroner Zafar Siddique concluded that Mr Mowl's death was due to suicide.

Foster joins Brum 2022 bid team



Former international athlete and long-distance runner Brendan Foster, backing the Commonwealth Games bid

FORMER Commonwealth Games 10,000 metres gold medalist Brendan Foster has joined the Birmingham 2022 bid team, which is trying to bring the event to the city.

He also won an Olympic bronze and two other Commonwealth Games medals in his athletics career and was founder of the Great Run Company, which manages Great Birmingham Run, Great Birmingham 10k and Birmingham International Marathon.

He will soon be retiring from the BBC Sport commentary team after this summer's London IAAF World Championship.

"Birmingham is an ambitious, vibrant city with a great sporting heritage and I believe the ideal location to host such a prestigious global event. Our company has a strong relationship with Birmingham through organising Great Run events in recent years and in October we'll be staging the first marathon in the city for 28 years," he said.

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Firm fan – Jim Davidson with Keith Emerson



Tribute gig – Jim will host the musical show



Jim's musical celebration for an old friend will raise charity

As a schoolboy, Jim Davidson developed a skill that few of his classmates had. It wasn't for maths, English or science. It was for truancy.

While the other kids were swatting up, Jim worked at a local hairdressers, where he'd brush the floor and listen to reggae. Another band caught his ear. They were called The Nice. "I loved them," he says.

His affection was short-lived as The Nice split up a year later. But their keyboardist, Keith Emerson, formed a new band – Emerson Lake and Palmer – and Jim fell in love again. "I was a fanatic," he says. "And I mean that. I was an absolute fanatic. When I worked for Radio Rentals, I used to drive round to their place in Fulham and go through the bins to find bits of paraphernalia. I used to phone them up just in case Keith was there and he answered the phone."

When Jim became famous, he hung out with Page 3 Girls at Tramp Nightclub. One night, a bloke walked in and tapped him on the shoulder. "He said 'I understand you're a fan of my band'." It was Keith Emerson. And so began a lifelong friendship.

"I couldn't speak to him at first," says Jim. "I just sat there, starstruck. Then I went outside and sat in my car. Keith came out and found me and told me to come back inside."

The two hung out, Keith staying at Jim's gaffe and Jim staying at Keith's. "I'd be in his dressing room before big shows in America. It was just great. When he died – he took his own life with a gun – his girlfriend called me first. The police had just come and taken him away. And the person she called was the guy who used to go through his bins. I must have meant so much to him."

Jim will pay an affectionate tribute to Keith at Birmingham's Symphony Hall tomorrow (Friday), in an event that will raise thousands of pounds for ex-soldiers. Keith Emerson – A Musical Celebration Of His Life, will feature his one-time rival and friend, Rick Wakeman, alongside a vast orchestra and other special guests.

Jim says: "In 1978, ELP were going to play in Montreal with a 60-piece orchestra. I called my manager and told him I was going to go. He told me not to but I said I was going. And then I got offered a TV series by Thames

Happy to help – Jim is one of the founders of Care After Combat



Television so my fanaticism went out the window and I ended up missing the gig. So this night at Birmingham brings things full circle. I finally get to see Keith's music with that massive orchestra."

The evening will feature both Keith's son and his grandson, respectively playing Fanfare For The Common Man and a solo piano piece. There'll be a keyboard prodigy, Rachel Flowers, from California, a Parisian jazz trio, a symphony orchestra and more – as well as Rick Wakeman.

"It's the biggest thing I've ever organised," says Jim. "It'll be fantastic. We're spending £54,000 on it – but there will be some proceeds and all of those will go to the servicemen and women's charity, Care After Combat."

Keith was obsessed with music. Over dinner, Jim would frequently observe

him as he zoned out of conversations and started writing dots on napkins – his latest compositions. He was as extravagant as any self-respecting 70s rock star ought to have been. "When I asked him if I should buy a Bentley, he said 'Nah, buy two'."

"He was the best man at one of my weddings, the third wife, I won't mention her name. He told me after that he felt he hadn't performed his duty properly – by talking me out of it. I once had a party in my garden. Roy Wood played guitar and Keith played keyboards. They were magic times."

These days, Jim has a day job. It's the first time he's held down a proper job since he worked in the Co-Op, before becoming famous. It's for Care After Combat, the charity he formed with Falklands hero, Simon Weston, and a former SAS Sergeant known only as Goose. Jim is looking forward to raising money for former soldiers.

"This is my day job now. And I think it's relevant because there's a similarity between Keith and the people leaving the military – it's the problem of transition. Later in his life, Keith's arms started to go a bit funny and his little finger got clawed-up. If you look at some of the later videos, you'll see him hardly

using his right hand. He was used to being the best but then he couldn't really play like he used to and that hit him hard. He was a delicate person when it came to the slugging-off, which all of us get in this business."

"And the problem was that as he got older he started to believe he'd lost his relevance. I think it was too much and circumstances led to his death."

"A similar thing happens with the military. They come out of service after being in the military family for 20 years and they're getting older. They can't compete and they lose their relevance – that's when they start drinking."

PROBLEM

That problem of losing relevance is a topic Jim has discussed with Simon Weston. "I visited him in hospital when he was being patched up. We got on well. We were aware that there are 3,500 veterans in prison and Simon said: 'You don't just stop being a noble warrior without there being a good reason'. So we're trying to find answers, we're trying to help veterans after they've been involved in combat, so they can live full and rewarding lives."

The money raised from next Friday's concert will do just that. It will help people who've served in war zones around the world. And Jim is thrilled that he'll be doing it in Birmingham – which, like the Black Country, has always been a home-from-home.

"I don't know what it is about your neck of the woods, but I love the people round there. Let me tell you a last story. I once had a really good mate called Slim. He was a million stone. He was a doorman at The Night Out and he loved his pint. He was very basic and very loud, as well as being terribly overweight. He sadly died and I drove from Norfolk to Birmingham for his funeral."

"There were 200 people outside the crematorium and another 200 inside, he was so popular, and I bumped into other mates, like Big Albert, who ran the Elbow Rooms. I knew everyone. It was like being in my home village. When they brought Old Slim out, they started playing his favourite song – it was one I'd recorded. Watching Over You, a Greg Lake song. Big Old Slim had chosen to check out with something I'd done – it made me as proud and humble as I've ever been. So, yes, I've always loved Birmingham and the Black Country."

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From Corrie star to Queen Of Hearts

She used to be the Queen of the Street. But now Corrie star Wendi Peters – aka Cilla Battersby – is the Queen of Hearts. Following sold-out seasons across the globe, the multi Grammy and Drama Desk Award-nominated Wonderland has received its UK and European première.

A new British production, which visits Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday until August 5, stars Wendi as the Queen Of Hearts.

It also features leading musical theatre star Dave Willetts as the White Rabbit, with We Will Rock You & Britain's Got Talent's Rachael Wooding as Alice.

Wendi says: "My job as an actress is to be creative. I just love the process of reading something off the page and thinking through how I'm going to best tell the story. I don't like doing anything for too long – I played Cilla Battersby in Coronation Street for four years, the longest time I've ever worked on the same role. It got to that point where I wasn't doing anything different and I knew I needed to create something new and get back out there to do theatre again, where I'd learnt my craft."

"People would watch me on TV four times a week and think that's all I could do, but they perhaps didn't realise that for 15 years before Coronation Street I'd been in musical theatre – it's lovely to go back to my roots and have a good old sing every night."

THRILLED

The music in Wonderland is one of Wendi's most favoured aspects. And she's thrilled to be lining up alongside David, the Birmingham-born singer and actor who left his job as a quality control supervisor at an engineering firm to pursue his dream of being a star.

David went on to feature in the West End in Les Misérables, in the lead role of Jean Valjean, before joining the Broadway cast. He then succeeded Michael Crawford in Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Phantom of the Opera, at Her Majesty's Theatre. Wendi loves the musical element of Wonderland.

She says: "The music is just amazing. Wonderland has a wonderful score by Frank Wildhorn with great vocals from everybody in the cast. There's music from every genre, there's rock, pop, pure musical theatre, boyband and even a bit of classical, there's something for every age. There's a modern twist on it – our Alice is 40 now and she has a teenage daughter, once she's back in Wonderland you meet all the familiar characters you know and love. There is the twist of the Looking Glass, anybody could change at any point."

"For this production we had nothing really to copy and that's lovely. I don't think that any actor should ever copy what's been before, but of course if the material's out there you're

Wonderful tonight – Wendi stars in Wonderland



The ex-Corrie actress stars alongside David Willetts



going to have a sneaky look at what's been done previously. Apart from a performance by the Broadway cast at the Tony Awards there's little else of Wonderland online and I love that because I can think through the character myself and be my best interpretation of the role and hopefully bring something new to it."

She found her way into the role of Queen of Hearts, taking inspiration from a number of sources. However, given that the British play is a UK first, she was able to create the role from scratch. And she's hoping local audiences will enjoy her portrayal – even though eating so many jam tarts has been no good for her waistline.

"With the Queen Of Hearts, there are so many different versions of her. The one that always stands out for me is the Disney film and that's probably the image that springs to mind for most

I do a lot of shouting, sing a bit and eat three jam tarts every show

people. There's a little bit of myself in my characterisation and I think that for any actor, to play the role truthfully there must be a little bit of their own self in the character."

"As the Queen Of Hearts, I do a lot of shouting, sing a few numbers and eat three jam tarts every show. By the time we get to Wolverhampton we'll have done about 200 shows, so I'll have eaten 600 jam tarts."

"It's always fun to play the baddie, but you must find something within them that does make people like them a little bit. I'd like to think that there will be a little bit of all my comedy heroes in my Queen Of Hearts. I love Molly Sugden, Peggy Mount and Patricia Routledge who played Hyacinth 'Bouquet' Bucket in Keeping Up Appearances – you can't help but love Hyacinth, she's a monster but part you that says 'oh isn't she wonderful.'"

WONDERLAND is now on sale at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre for performances between 31 July – 5 August 2017. Tickets from www.grandtheatre.co.uk.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

A scene from Miss Saigon



The heat is on for summer blockbuster Miss Saigon

The first time you see Miss Saigon, I guarantee it will be etched on your heart forever. It's completely and utterly unforgettable.

Music is by the incomparable team, Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, while lyrics are by Alain and Richard Maltby Jr. It came hot on the heels of the team's epic musical phenomenon Les Misérables when it premiered in the 1980s, and 30 years on is still filling theatres, writes Alison Norton.

Miss Saigon is based on Puccini's Madame Butterfly, and tells the tragic love story of a teenage Vietnamese girl and an American GI who meet during the Vietnam war. In this production of Miss Saigon,

The Engineer, who is essentially a pimp, is played by Red Concepcion, an engaging actor from the Philippines. "This is my first show in Europe and in the UK, which is very exciting!" he says. "The Engineer is nasty but funny and charming in his own way."

A highlight in the show is a life-sized helicopter, which lands and then takes off again on stage. I saw it on the day I visited the cast at one of their technical rehearsal days in Leicester. Spoiler alert! Let's just say you hear it before you see it and the effect is nothing short of chilling. It's one of the most incredible special affects you will ever see in theatre.

Catch Miss Saigon at Birmingham Hippodrome, it is on now and continues until September 23. Visit www.birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000.

Pinch me, I'm so lucky to get this role



He's a platinum-selling recording artist, actor, producer, author and ambassador for the Prince's Trust. Darius Campbell is a man of many talents.

He is currently touring the UK with Funny Girl The Musical, which brings the former Pop Idol finalist to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre until its final performance in the city on Saturday night. He is leading man Nick Arnstein starring alongside Natasha J Barnes as Fanny Brice.

"Funny Girl is such a pleasure, we opened in London and now

we're touring with Natasha. It is the number one romantic musical comedy of all time – and I get to be the leading man, so pinch me. I get to do it again 18 months on and we're still performing to standing ovations. I'm very lucky.

"We've got some of the best music and maybe the best songs of the last 70 years. The show is 50 years old and it hasn't been performed here since the original with Barbara Streisand which shot her to fame. They made a film of it that won five Academy Awards."

Campbell came to fame through reality TV, though he's long since outgrown those roots.

"It's been 17 years since my original audition for Pop Idol and 15 years since my single Colourblind went to number one in the charts."

"It was 2005 when I first stepped into the West End, as Billy Flynn in Chicago and since then I've got to work with my musical theatre heroes, Sir Trevor Nunn, Sir Tim Rice and take the lead in musicals that I've loved being part of, stories that are classic, the leading man romantic stories such as Gone With The Wind, Guys And Dolls and From Here To Eternity. Funny Girl is the jewel in the crown of musicals."

Beverley to star in her first panto

Beverley Knight will perform in her first-ever pantomime this year at Birmingham Hippodrome.

The 44-year-old actress and singer from Wolverhampton will take on the role of The Fairy Godmother in Cinderella. Other stars set to take part in the show are Strictly Come Dancing's Danny Mac, Hippodrome favourite funnyman Matt Slack, comedians The Grumbleweeds, Ceri Dupree and Phil Randall. Playing Cinderella will be Suzanne Shaw, formerly of pop group Hear'Say.



Young musicians are set to impress

More than 100 remarkable musicians are set to impress at Birmingham's Town Hall next Sunday afternoon (August 6), and they are all aged under 12. The National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain, which run six national age-banded orchestras and six regional youth orchestras, are bringing their under-12s to the prestigious venue for a performance of great classical works.

Led by conductor Natalia Luis-Bassa, the young musicians will present a programme including Mars from Holst's The Planets, Finlandia by Sibelius, Montagues and Capulets from Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, music from Bizet's Carmen and the energetic Conga del Fuego Nuevo by Marquez.

Tickets start from £18 for the 3.30pm concert. For tickets see www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

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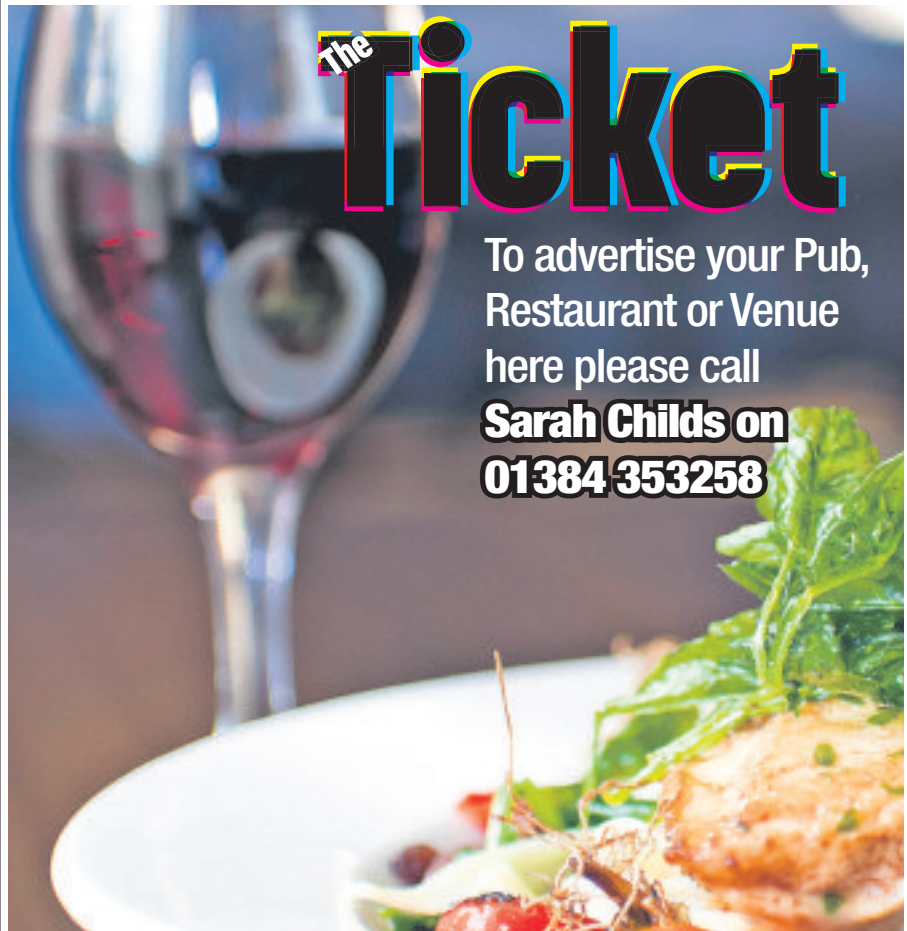


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CHOICE



Crystal Yu & Charles Venn

Casualty (BBC1, 9.05pm)
Paul Unwin, the man who co-created Casualty back in 1986, returns as a guest writer for an episode that covers the span of an hour within Holby's Emergency Department. Duffy has her hands full as she is shadowed by a pair of school-girls planning to enter the medical profession, and Jez is crippled by guilt after he manages to rescue a woman from a house fire, but did not realise he saved her at the expense of her baby. Meanwhile, Ethan throws himself into his work following the incident with Scott, and when the ailing leader of a marching band arrives feeling unwell, Louise is forced to leave him in triage, with disastrous consequences. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Brendan Foster: A Life in Athletics. **2.00** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League. Hull FC v Leeds Rhinos (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Film: Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit. (1993) A singer who once posed as a nun joins the order again to help save a Catholic school by making a success of its choir. Comedy sequel, starring Whoopi Goldberg.
6.45 BBC News.
6.55 Regional Programme.
7.00 Pointless Celebrities. Sports stars Willie Thorne, Tony Jacklin, Andy Fordham, Deta Hedman, Tessa Sanderson, Derek Redmond, Nick Easter and Martin Offiah take part in the unorthodox quiz show. (R)
7.50 Would I Lie to You? Clara Amfo, Tom Davis, Shaun Ryder and Henning Wehn help team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack deceive their opponents with plausible lies. Hosted by Rob Brydon. (R)
8.20 Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles challenges two pairs of complete strangers to team up, and battle it out to list as much as they know about a given subject.
9.05 Casualty. Duffy guides a pair of school-girls through an average hour in the ED, in a special episode of the medical drama written by Casualty co-creator Paul Unwin. Last in the series.
10.00 BBC News: Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.20 Film: Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull. (2008) The globe-trotting archaeologist teams up with a rebellious teenager who draws him into a search in the Amazon jungle for a mysterious artefact of untold power. But their quest is hindered by Soviet agents, who also want the fabled object for an altogether more sinister purpose. Action adventure sequel, updating the series to a Cold War setting, starring Harrison Ford.
12.15 Film: When in Rome. (2009) An unlucky-in-love woman steals coins from a supposedly magical fountain in Italy and attracts a host of potential suitors. Romantic comedy, with Kristen Bell and Josh Duhamel. **1.40** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.45** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 The Deep. **6.30** The Deep. **6.55** Film: Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo. (1977) **8.35** Film: Mars Needs Moms. (2011) **10.00** Monty Halls' Great Irish Escape. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Nigel and Adam's Farm Kitchen. (R) **1.00** Natural World: Jungle Gremlins of Java. (R) **2.00** Mastermind. (R) **2.30** University Challenge. (R) **3.00** Only Connect. (R) **3.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **4.30** Jessica Ennis-Hill and the Next Generation. **5.00** Live Swimming: World Championships.
6.00 Cycling: Women's Grand Prix. Live coverage of the Prudential RideLondon Classique, which takes place on a 5.5km circuit in central London, taking in some of the city's most famous landmarks.
6.50 Proms Extra. Katie Derham revisits Walton's Facade from the Malcolm Sargent Prom, and celebrates the work of British composer Scott Walker. Plus, David Owen Norris' Chord of the Week.
7.30 Grand Tours of Scotland. Paul Murton travels round the Isle of Arran, visiting the famous King's Cave, Lochranza, Brodick Castle and Kildonan before ending his trip at Cleat's Shore. (R)
8.00 Dad's Army. Mainwaring decides the platoon needs a mascot for a big parade and plumps for a ram, but catching a suitable candidate for the job proves easier said than done. (R)
8.30 All Families Have Secrets - Patrick Gale's Art of Fiction. Patrick Gale speaks to Stephen Fry about his experience of being an out gay writer for the past 30 years, and the inspiration behind Man in an Orange Shirt, his screenwriting debut.
9.00 Queer as Art. The BBC's Gay Britannia season continues, as artists, writers, musicians and performers discuss the LGBT community's contributions to the arts in Britain during the past 50 years.
10.00 QI XL. Panelists Julia Zimiro, Matt Lucas and David Mitchell and Alan Davies compete, as host Stephen Fry hosts an expanded edition of the comedy quiz show.
10.45 Imagine - Mapplethorpe. A portrait of American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.
12.40 Film: Sleep Tight. (2011) **2.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.30** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventure. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.55** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** ITV Racing: The Opening Show. **10.20** Go's Lunchbox. (R) **11.15** 1000 Heartbeats. (R) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** Tipping Point. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Ascot. Coverage of today's meeting from Ascot. **4.00** The Chase. (R) **5.00** Little Big Shots USA.
6.00 Regional Programme: Weather.
6.05 ITV News: Weather.
6.15 You've Been Framed! Goes Wild! Harry Hill presents another hour-long edition of his popular programme, showcasing embarrassing home-videos and malfunctioning moments, filmed and submitted by loyal viewers. Clips feature flatulent selfies, misused contraceptives and a rather distracting wedding guest. (R)
7.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, inviting contestants Steve, Charlene and Lenny to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in clues offered by Mr Chips and his state-of-the-art 3D graphic animations. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, with a holiday and a massive £50,000 cash sum up for grabs.
8.00 Film: The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug. (2013) The party of dwarves and their hobbit ally continue the quest to reclaim their lost kingdom, journeying through the forest home of ancestral enemy the elves and finally facing the dragon that drove them from their home. Meanwhile, Gandalf the wizard investigates the rise of a mysterious dark power. Part two of Peter Jackson's fantasy adventure trilogy based on JRR Tolkien's novel, starring Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage and Orlando Bloom.
11.00 ITV News: Weather.
11.25 The Chase. (R)
12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.40 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **7.05** London Triathlon. **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.30** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Big House, Little House. **5.30** Channel 4 News.
6.00 Formula 1 Hungarian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. Steve Jones presents action from the qualifying session at the Hungaroring in Budapest, where the drivers battled for pole position ahead of the 11th round of the season. It was the Mercedes drivers who performed best in qualifying at this track last season, with the now-retired Nico Rosberg claiming pole position, and Lewis Hamilton one place behind in second on the starting grid.
7.30 UEFA Women's Euro 2017. Coverage of a quarter-final match (Kick-off TBA), featuring teams that were drawn in Groups A and B, as the competition staged in the Netherlands continues. The team to emerge victorious from this match will progress to one of the semi-finals, which are due to take place on Thursday. Subsequent programmes are subject to change.
10.00 Film: 47 Ronin. (2013) A former slave leads a band of samurai as they battle monstrous and magical enemies in a quest for redemption. Fantasy adventure, with Keanu Reeves and Hiroyuki Sanada.
12.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Gordon Ramsay visits a restaurant in Providence, Rhode Island. (R) **1.00** The Last Leg. Comedy legend John Cleese joins Adam Hills, Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker for a comical review of the week. (R) **1.55** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Grace prepares to take down her and Warren's blackmailer, Alfie tries to help Lily and Prince, and Sally surprises Neeta with a ticket to Ibiza. **3.55** Location, Location, Location. Helping prospective buyers in Wiltshire. (R) **4.50** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. Three homeowners in West Sussex compete to sell their homes. (R) **5.40** Shipping Wars UK. Russell moves 15 unique giraffe artworks worth £75,000. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.20** Film: Bob the Builder: Mega Machines. (2017) Premiere. Construction-site animation, with the voice of Lee Ingleby. **10.30** Funniest Guest Kittens Ever. (R) **11.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.25** Film: The Time Machine. (2002) Sci-fi adventure, starring Guy Pearce. **3.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.05** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Documentary series giving an insight into the world of debt collection. Kevin Stokes and Brian O'Shaughnessy try to collect a debt from a technology company, but with the director nowhere to be seen, the office manager does everything she can to prove the business is no longer trading. Stewart McCracken and Elmor Victor face a heart-breaking house repossession in Merseyside, where two landlords are forced to evict a tenant recovering from a brain tumour which has cost him his job and income. (R)
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v South Africa. Highlights of the third day's play in the Third Test of the four-match series, which took place at The Oval in London.
7.55 5 News Weekend.
8.00 Live Boxing. Coverage from the SSE Arena in Belfast, ahead of the main event between Carl Frampton and Andres Gutierrez.
8.30 FIA Formula E Live. The first Montreal ePrix race. Coverage of the first two races staged at the Montreal Street Circuit, which serves as the 11th and penultimate round of the season. This is a brand new circuit set in the centre of the Canadian city, and features 14 turns in a lap that is 2.75km long.
10.10 Live Boxing. Carl Frampton v Andres Gutierrez. Coverage of the featherweight bout from SSE Arena in Belfast, as The Jackal returns to the ring for the first time since losing his world title.
12.00 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.05** Film: Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans. (2009) Crime drama, starring Nicolas Cage. **5.00** Great Artists. Spanish painter Velazquez. (R) **5.25** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Secret Life of Rockpools **8.00** Britain's Treasure Islands **9.00** I Know Who You Are **11.30** Rich Hall's Countrier Than You **1.00** Bob Harris: My Nashville **2.00** The Secret Life of Rockpools **3.00** Britain's Treasure Islands **4.00** Close
ITV2
11.25 Take Me Out **12.35** Catchphrase: Celebrity Special **1.40** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **2.05** You've Been Framed! Gold **3.10** Film: See Spot Run (2001) **4.10** FYI Daily **4.15** Film: See Spot Run (2001) **5.05** Film: The Smurfs 2 (2013) **6.05** FYI Daily **6.10** Film: The Smurfs 2 (2013) **7.10** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **8.10** FYI Daily **8.15** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **9.00** Film: The Hangover (2009) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: The Hangover (2009) **11.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.00** Film: Keith Lemon: The Film (2012) **2.00** FYI Daily **2.05** Film: Keith Lemon: The Film (2012) **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.30 Film: Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1969) **1.30** Wycliffe **2.45** Sherlock Holmes: The Last Vampyre **5.00** Lewis **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Law & Order: UK **1.55** On the Buses **2.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
11.00 The Professionals **1.05** Minder **3.15** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **4.25** FYI Daily **4.30** Film: Dunkirk (1958) **6.00** Better Late Than Never **7.00** Master Carpark **8.00** Film: Police Academy 3: Back in Training (1986) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10** Film: Police Academy 3: Back in Training (1986) **9.50** Film: The Book of Eli (2010) **10.55** FYI Daily **11.00** Film: The Book of Eli (2010) **12.05** Film: Barb Wire (1996) **1.05** FYI Daily **1.10** Film: Barb Wire (1996) **2.05** Road Racing Series **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.40 Film: Astro Boy (2009) **1.30** Film: Toy Story of TERROR! (2013) **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: This Is 40 (2012) **11.40** Gogglebox **1.20** Rude Tube **2.25** Tattoo Fixers **3.20** Gogglebox **4.00** How I Met Your Mother **4.45** Rude(ish) Tube
Film4
11.00 Bollywood Queen (2002) **1.00** A Monster in Paris (2011) **2.45** Baby's Day Out (1994) **4.35** We Bought a Zoo (2011) **7.00** The Way Way Back (2013) Comedy drama, starring Liam James. **9.00** The Green Mile (1999) **12.40** As Above, So Below (2014) **2.25** Rec 3: Genesis (2012) **4.00** Close

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CHOICE



Aidan Turner

Poldark

(BBC1, 9pm)

Ross is determined to ensure that George loses in the election, and resolves to make up for some of Trenwith's neglect - he also becomes aware of Hugh's feelings for Demelza as he returns to Nampara to find them together. George is consumed with paranoia as he challenges Dwight over Valentine's legitimacy and drives Elizabeth away. Rowella attempts to seduce Whitworth, who receives advice from Dwight over his relationship with Morwenna, Lord Falmouth will be standing against him, and Sam pines over Emma.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Cycling: Ride London. **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.00** Songs of Praise. **3.35** Cycling: Ride London. Live coverage of the Prudential RideLondon-Surrey Classic. **6.35** BBC News. **6.50** Regional Programme. **7.00** **Wild Alaska Live.** Liz Bonnin, Matt Baker and Steve Backshall conclude the coverage of Alaskan wildlife during the summer. The programme features footage of black bear cubs trying to catch enough food to make it through the winter, wolves competing with brown bears for the best fishing positions, orcas and humpback whales gathering at sea, and eagles hunting as the salmon complete their migration. Last in the series. **8.00** **Countryfile.** A look at green spaces and wildlife in urban areas. Anita Rani visits a haven for animals in Stoke Newington, and helps an urban photographer track a pair of nesting common terns. Sean Fletcher joins Manchester airport's environment team, James Wong meets Liverpool residents growing vegetables on their roofs, Tom Heap investigates air pollution, and Adam Henson meets former services personnel rebuilding their lives through farming. **9.00** **Poldark.** Ross becomes aware of Hugh's feelings for Demelza, George is consumed with paranoia as he challenges Dwight over Valentine's legitimacy and drives Elizabeth away. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** **The Heroes of Super Saturday: Jess, Mo & Greg.** Michael Johnson takes a look back at the day of competition known as "Super Saturday" at the 2012 Olympic Games, focusing on Jessica Ennis-Hill, Mo Farah and Greg Rutherford. **11.30** **Film: The Peacemaker.** (1997) Two mismatched government operatives are forced to put aside their differences to find a stolen cache of nuclear warheads. Action thriller, with George Clooney. **1.25** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.50** The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.35** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.35** The Barchgrove Garden. **9.05** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bits. **11.30** Nigel Slater: Eating Together. (R) **12.00** Food & Drink. (R) **12.30** **Film: Miss Potter.** (2006) Victorian writer and illustrator Beatrix Potter falls in love while trying to find a publisher for her work. Biographical period drama, starring Renée Zellweger and Ewan McGregor. **2.00** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League. Wigan Warriors v Salford Red Devils (Kick-off 2.30pm). Tanya Arnold presents coverage of the second semi-final, which takes place at Halliwell Jones Stadium in Warrington. **4.30** Live Swimming: World Championships. Helen Skelton presents coverage of the eighth and final day from Danube Arena in Budapest, Hungary, which will include the finals of the men's and women's 400m individual medley. **7.00** **World War One Remembered: Passchendaele.** Kirsty Young introduces live coverage from Flanders, Belgium, of the ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of the First World War battle. This is followed by a dramatic event staged in Ypres that tells the story of the battle and those involved in it, as well as performances from Alfie Boe, War Horse and the cast of The Wipers' Times. Dan Snow reports from the streets of Ypres. **10.00** **Film: Pride.** (2014) Gay rights activists gather in London for a pride march in 1984, and decide they have a common cause with the miners' strike. When their fundraising activities are rejected by the miners' union, they travel to a Welsh pit village to show their support in person. Fact-based drama, starring Ben Schnetzer, Bill Nighy, Andrew Scott and Imelda Staunton. **11.50** **Film: Lifting.** (2014) The mother and boyfriend of a dead man form a connection as they deal with their grief, despite having no language in common. Drama, with Ben Whishaw and Pei-pai Cheng. **1.15** Sign Zone: Countryfile. John Craven visits a conservation project for great bustards in Salisbury Plain, while Anita Rani meets contestants in the international young beekeepers' competition. (R) **2.10** Holly City. Drama series charting life on the wards of Holby City Hospital. (R) **3.10** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.20** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.30** Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjago: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.20** Long Lost Family. (R) **11.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.20** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **12.55** Rebound. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **2.55** Bear Grylls Survival School. **3.25** **Film: A View to a Kill.** (1985) James Bond adventure, starring Roger Moore. **6.00** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.10** ITV News: Weather. **6.30** **Diana, Our Mother: Her Life and Legacy.** The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry talk about their mother Diana, Princess of Wales, and pay tribute to the many ways her influence has shaped their lives. The brothers share some of their earliest memories of her, recall the final contact they had with her before her death in August 1997, and discuss their feelings in the aftermath of that event. Featuring contributions from Elton John, Rihanna and Diana's brother, Earl Spencer. (R) **8.00** **Film: Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.** (2007) The young wizard struggles to convince his fellow sorcerers that the evil Lord Voldemort has returned to life. When Hogwarts headmaster Dumbledore is ousted in favour of a sadistic replacement, Harry realises he must take matters into his own hands, uniting his fellow pupils to form a secret army and training them for the inevitable confrontation to come. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint and Gary Oldman. **10.30** ITV News: Weather. **10.50** **Judge Rinder's Crime Stories.** Barrister Robert Rinder examines real-life cases, looking at the events leading up to crimes, going through the police investigations and summing up the trials. (R) **11.50** **Take Me Out.** Men try to impress 30 single women and win a date. Paddy McGuinness presents. (R) **12.50** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. **4.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Last Man Standing. **6.45** Last Man Standing. **7.10** Last Man Standing. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Eat the Week. **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.25** The Simpsons. (R) **2.55** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **3.40** Homes by the Sea. (R) **4.45** Channel 4 News. **5.15** Formula 1 Hungarian Grand Prix Highlights. **7.30** **UEFA Women's Euro 2017.** Coverage of a quarter-final match (Kick-off TBA), featuring teams that were drawn in Groups C and D, as the competition staged in the Netherlands continues. The team to emerge victorious from this match will progress to one of the semi-finals, which are due to take place on Thursday. Subsequent programmes are subject to change. **10.00** **The Handmaid's Tale.** Janine is sentenced to a brutal punishment for her acts of disobedience, which leaves Offred and her fellow Handmaids faced with an unthinkable choice. Last in the series. **11.10** **Naked Attraction.** Anna Richardson hosts as 22-year-old Sophie seeks a conversational partner, while 25-year-old Dom hopes to find a confident, daring and adventurous man. (R) **12.15** **Film: Moonrise Kingdom.** (2012) The inhabitants of an island community are thrown into a panic as they search for two runaway children. Wes Anderson's comedy drama, with Bruce Willis and Edward Norton. **1.50** 60 Days in Jail. Criminal justice student Dion is the last volunteer to enter the jail. (R) **2.35** KOTV Boxing Weekly. Featuring highlights of bouts in England, Russia, Mexico and the United States. **3.05** Gilette World Sport. Including a look at how New England Patriots' Devin McCourty stays in top condition. **3.30** Mobil 1 The Grid. Max Verstappen provides a tour of the Red Bull factory in Milton Keynes. (R) **3.55** Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer visit the south-east of England to help a family of five in need of a larger property, and new parents searching for a home. (R) **4.50** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. The host helps three homeowners in Worthing compete to sell their properties to potential buyers, including mother and daughter Jo and Ruby who improve their attic. (R) **5.45** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Pip Ahoy! **6.10** Poppy Cat. **6.25** Mr Men. **6.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.40** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.50** Wipps. (R) **6.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.10** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.20** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.30** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **7.35** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **7.40** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.55** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.40** Wipps. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** **Film: Fireman Sam: Heroes of the Storm.** (2014) **10.30** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. **10.55** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.50** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.50** **Film: Ace Ventura: Pet Detective.** (1994) Comedy, starring Jim Carrey. **2.30** **Film: Zookeeper.** (2011) Comedy, starring Kevin James. **4.25** **Film: Cheaper By the Dozen 2.** (2005) **6.05** **Now That's Funny!** A collection of internet-sourced videos with a family-friendly hook, featuring laugh-out-loud unexpected personal moments now being shared with the world. (R) **7.00** **Cricket on 5.** England v South Africa. Highlights of the fourth day's play in the Third Test of the four-match series, which took place at The Oval in London. **7.55** **5 News Weekend.** **8.00** **Film: Dirty Dancing.** (1987) A dance instructor at a 1960s resort teaches a naive teenager about self-expression as they perform in an important show. Romantic drama, with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. Edited for language and violence. **9.00** **5 News Update.** **9.05** **Film: Dirty Dancing.** (1987) Concluded. Edited for language and violence. **10.05** **The Dirty Dancing Story.** A 30th anniversary celebration of the movie phenomenon, revisiting favourite scenes, discovering what happened on set and hearing from the supporting cast and crew. (R) **11.35** **Premiership Rugby Sevens.** Action from the pre-season tournament at Franklin's Gardens in Northampton, which saw all 12 Premiership clubs compete in a revamped version of the tournament. **12.35** FIA Formula E: Highlights. **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** The Hotel Inspector Abroad. (R) **4.00** The Railways That Built Britain with Chris Tarrant. (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.45** Chinese Food in Minutes. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Laura Mvula on Nina Simone **7.30** BBC Proms 2017 **11.30** Norman Wisdom: His Story **12.30** Horizon: 10 Things You Need to Know About the Future **1.30** Beautiful Thing: A Passion for Porcelain **2.30** Treasures of the Anglo-Saxons **3.30** Laura Mvula on Nina Simone **4.00** Close
ITV2
1.00 You've Been Framed! Gold **1.30** **Film: The Waterboy** (1998) **2.30** **FYI Daily: 2.35** **Film: The Waterboy** (1998) **3.20** **Film: Yogi Bear** (2010) **4.20** **FYI Daily: 4.25** **Film: Yogi Bear** (2010) **4.55** **Film: Nancy McPhee** (2005) **5.55** **FYI Daily: 6.00** **Film: Nancy McPhee** (2005) **6.50** **Film: Step Up** (2006) **7.55** **FYI Daily: 8.00** **Film: Step Up** (2006) **9.00** Love Island: The Reunion **10.25** Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **12.30** **Film: Bachelorette** (2012) **1.30** **FYI Daily: 1.35** **Film: Bachelorette** (2012) **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** **ITV2** Nightscreen **ITV3**
11.45 The Darling Buds of May **12.50** **Film: Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo** (1990) **2.50** Wycliffe **3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Lewis **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Wire in the Blood **2.00** Sherlock Holmes: The Last Vampyre **3.45** May the Best House Win **ITV4**
6.00 Goodwood Festival of Speed **7.00** Football Rivalries **7.15** **Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol** (1987) **8.20** **FYI Daily: 8.25** **Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol** (1987) **9.00** **Film: The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!** (1988) **10.05** **FYI Daily: 10.10** **Film: The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!** (1988) **10.50** **Film: Mars Attacks!** (1996) **11.50** **FYI Daily: 11.55** **Film: Mars Attacks!** (1996) **1.00** Car Crash Global **2.00** Mindy **2.55** **ITV4** Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**
12.00 Binky & JP's Baby: Born in Chelsea **1.00** Kevin Can Wait **1.30** New Girl **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** **Film: The Day After Tomorrow** (2004) **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.00** Born in Chelsea: Baby Steps **10.00** **Film: The Change-Up** (2011) **12.15** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **1.20** Born in Chelsea: Baby Steps **2.55** Gogglebox **Film4**
11.00 Flight of the Navigator (1986) **1.00** The Jane Austen Book Club (2007) **3.05** Gulliver's Travels (2010) **4.45** The Return of the Musketeers (1989) **6.55** Home Alone (1990) **9.00** Lucy (2014) **10.40** The Family (2013) **12.55** Devil's Knot (2013) **3.15** Close

THE KNIGHTS QUEST



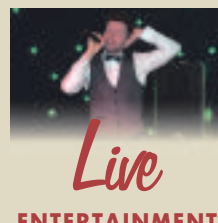
CHARITY EVENTS

WEDNESDAY
2nd August

LIVE LOVE LAUGH

An evening with Black Country comedian **JONNY COLE** and the infamous female solo artist**CHARLIE WATERFORD**Starts 8.30pm
Tickets available £3

THE KNIGHTS QUEST

Great
FOOD & DRINKExcellent
AMENITIESTHURSDAY
3rd August

STARMAKERS KARAOKE

Plus SLAVE AUCTION, AUCTION of a PROMISE and RAFFLE Guaranteed to be a laugh
FREE ENTRYSATURDAY
5th August

PURE MAGIC

Freddie Mercury Tribute Plus Bryan May Tribute

Disco 'til 2am
£4 Entry
Starts 8.30pmSATURDAY
5th August Daytime8am-11am
THE BIG BREAKFAST £5Sponsored by
MAKRO10am-12noon
ROY DAVIES**SILENCE IS GOLDEN**12noon - 3pm
THE STOCKSAttendance from
MAA and Blood Bikers throughout (Jayne's in the stocks from 2pm)FRIDAY
4th August

DAVE GOLDING

Plus DISCO
Including Raffle
£3 Entry
Starts 8.30pmSUNDAY
6th August

Blood Bikers and Barnaby from Midlands Air Ambulance from 12 noon

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FREE ENTRY Starts 8.30pm

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
I Am Bolt, BBC1, 8.30pm
 Documentary about the life and career of world-record breaking Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, who has won the 100m and 200m gold medals at the last three Olympics. The film follows him as he prepares for the Rio 2016 Olympics and there is archive footage of his personal life and from his athletics career. (2016)

TUESDAY
A Trace of Danger, Channel 5, 3.15pm
 A defence attorney represents her high-school boyfriend, who stands accused of murdering his wife. As they discover they still have feelings for each other, the lawyer faces being a public hate figure as everyone is convinced of her client's guilt – while someone is determined to stop the truth being discovered. Thriller, starring Emmanuelle Vaugier. (2010)



Old School, Friday, BBC1, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY
Man Up, BBC2, 9pm
 While traveling across London to attend a party to celebrate her parents' 10th wedding anniversary, a thirtysomething single woman is mistaken for a recently divorced stranger's blind date, so decides to spend a chaotic evening with him. However, she has to face the consequences when he realises she is not his intended blind date. Romantic comedy, starring Lake Bell and Simon Pegg. (2015)

THURSDAY
Out of Reach, Channel 5, 3.10pm
 A woman faces having her family torn apart when her husband enters into a business arrangement with two lifestyle coaches, only to end up joining their cult of followers. She struggles to get him away from their influence, but the conflict grows more serious when the sect tries to gain custody of her daughter. Thriller, starring Erin Klarup and Lochlyn Munro. (2013)

FRIDAY
Old School, BBC1, 11.05pm
 A lawyer decides to relive the wild, crazy days of his youth after his girlfriend is unfaithful, and enlists the help of two equally disillusioned friends in setting up a fraternity house next to his former college campus. Comedy, starring Luke Wilson and Will Ferrell. (2003)

Patrick is hoping that his new project is a novel success

Patrick Gale is the BBC's man of the moment. On Saturday, he was interviewed by Stephen Fry, a self-confessed fan of Gale's novels for the past 30 years.

During their chat, Gale discussed being a rare example of an out gay novelist during his early years as a writer, as well as his most ambitious project to date, Man in an Orange Shirt.

This two-part drama is Gale's first screenplay, and while he has always mined his family history for his work, this time he dug deeper than ever before, to expose a secret about his parents' marriage.

The story focuses on two love affairs, 60 years apart. The first is set in 1944, during which British Army Captain Michael Berryman falls for artist Thomas March following a chance meeting in southern Italy.

Despite having a young fiancée, the usually strait-laced Michael throws himself into a relationship with Thomas, and they briefly live as

a couple after the war. Thomas paints his lover's portrait – the titular Man in an Orange Shirt – before Michael decides to return to Flora and live a conventional life as a married man and father.

Thomas, meanwhile, embarks on a risky existence as a gay man in 1940s Soho. But will either of them be truly happy again? And at what lengths will Flora go to keep her new family together?

The story then moves to the present day, as an ageing Flora witnesses her grandson's tentative relationship with another man is a far more accepting world. However, their path to happiness is still littered with potential pitfalls.

"Man In An Orange Shirt is the most exciting project I've worked on to date: an original drama exploring strands of gay male experience since the 1940s," says Gale. "It has been such a privilege to be given such an open brief and then allowed to run with it.

"I don't want to give too much away but after much experimenting,

we've ended up with two hour-long films – one set in the 1940s and 50s, one set in the violently contrasted present; one depicting a love story made impossible by pressures from society, one a love story nearly derailed by the long-term fallout from the 1940s story."

He adds: "People who know my novels will be unsurprised to hear that that stories give equal focus to wives and mothers and are very much about tensions between family bonds, the need to be good and the urge to seize happiness. I hope they'll appeal equally to straight and gay viewers, but also that they'll leave either side feeling challenged about things they take for granted.

"Already I can see that the look of the show is going to be incredible. Here's hoping it starts a national conversation."

It promises to be an enthralling and moving series, one that benefits from a strong cast that includes Vanessa Redgrave and Joanna Vanderham as Flora at different stages in her life.



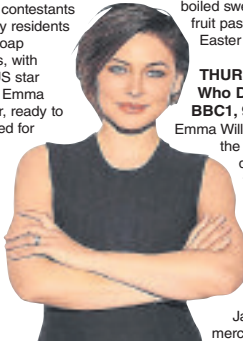
Man in an Orange Shirt, Monday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

food historian Dr Annie Gray and social historian Emma Dabiri, the sweet-makers head to Blists Hill, Shropshire, to experience first-hand the life of confectioners in late 19th and early 20th century England. The team recreate a range of Victorian treats to stock their sweet shop, from jars of boiled sweets to their own version of fruit pastilles, and an enormous Easter egg. Last in the series.

THURSDAY Who Do You Think You Are? BBC1, 9pm

Emma Willis is the latest to take part in the popular genealogy documentary, in which famous faces trace their family trees. The TV presenter, who considers herself a true Brummie, is keen to learn more about her family in Birmingham, tracing back to Victorian times and her hard-working ancestor James Grettton, a local merchant. The Big Brother host then learns that her father's



Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch, Tuesday, Channel 5, 9pm

TUESDAY Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch Channel 5, 9pm

New series. As one door closes, another one opens. Just seven days after Channel 5 crowned its latest Big Brother winner, it reopens the house to make way for a fresh batch of contestants – but this time, of course, the new reality residents are all famous faces. Cue a roll call of soap actors, reality stars and glamour models, with the odd Loose Women presenter and US star thrown in for good measure. As always, Emma Willis introduces each one as they enter, ready to have their every word and move recorded for the enjoyment of the viewing public. It's to be hoped BB fans don't have anything else planned for the next few weeks.

WEDNESDAY The Sweet Makers: A Victorian Treat BBC2, 8pm

Four modern confectioners use original recipes to recreate a Victorian sweet shop, and discover how the quest to satisfy our national sweet tooth transformed Britain. Guided by

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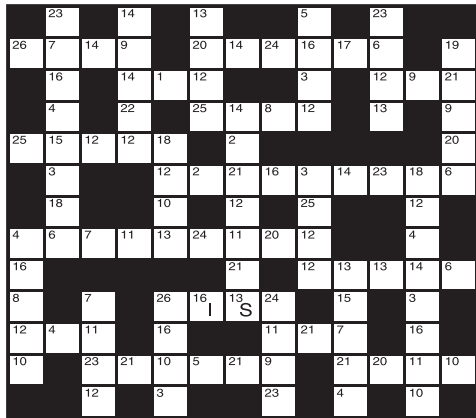
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BRAIN GYM

No.440

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

1	M	2	Y	3	X	4	O	5	L	6	Z	7	N	8	J	9	R	10	A	11	T	12	V	13	K
14	H	15	G	16	U	17	S	18	Q	19	D	20	P	21	C	22	I	23	E	24	F	25	W	26	B

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
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10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

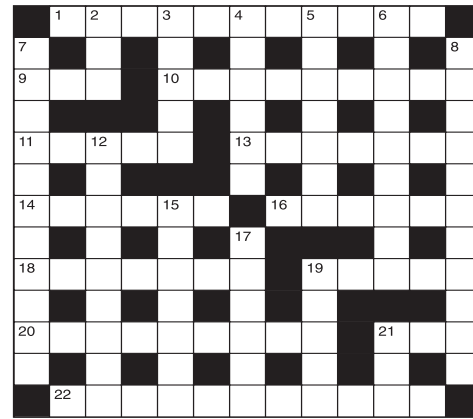
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Pocket money makes very little difference (5,6)
9. Joint invitation to cheer (3)
10. Took the main course but possibly not a sweet (4,2,3)
11. Area measures, out of doors (5)
13. Is it for the fleet-footed? (4,3)
14. Business concern (6)
16. Church worker with grave responsibilities (6)
18. Fresh suet not exported (4,3)
19. City of legendary character (5)
20. A leader of opinion (9)
21. Sign held by Cleopatra (3)
22. Be confident, sleep is guaranteed (4,7)

Down

2. Plan a letter to mother (3)
3. Statute has two points that need cutting (5)
4. Recent change of heart (6)
5. Performer makes a start that is different (7)
6. Perhaps most agree it may well be an eyesore (9)
7. A cutting response (5,6)
8. Bullet that meant goodbye for someone? (7,4)
12. Insulting attack (9)
15. Decrease one's difficulties (4,3)
17. Steps inside? (6)
19. Paul and I cooked a foreign dish (5)
21. A swimmer comes up for shelter (3)



Quick Clues:

Across

1. Solid (11)
9. Cereal plant (3)
10. Consideration (9)
11. Swift (5)
13. Flow from (7)
14. Option (6)
16. Counsel (6)
18. Rival (7)
19. Tinted (5)
20. Hold back (9)
21. Marshlands (3)
22. Plundering (11)

Down

2. Employ (3)
3. Inadequate (5)
4. Sacred song (6)
5. Drinking vessel (7)
6. Excitement (9)
7. Expertness (11)
8. Self-reliant (11)
12. Persuasive speech (9)
15. Prattle (7)
17. Look at (6)
19. Dogma (5)
21. Distant (3)

Sudoku

9			1			7	6	
	6		2					5
5		7			6			
			4			6	5	
	4	8		6		2		7
	1	5			2			
8						9		4
7			3		4			
	3	1			8		7	2

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

1	8	5	6	4	3	9	7	2
3	6	7	9	5	2	8	1	4
2	9	4	8	1	7	5	3	6
6	2	9	5	7	8	3	4	1
4	5	3	2	9	1	7	6	8
7	1	8	3	6	4	2	9	5
9	7	1	4	2	5	6	8	3
8	4	2	7	3	6	1	5	9
5	3	6	1	8	9	4	2	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Most; 3 Placated; 9 Droplet; 10 Mout; 11 Catty remarks; 13 Droplet; 15 Adhere; 17 Schoofellow; 20 Icing; 21 Patient; 22 Canonise; 23 Rear. Down: 1 Medicine; 2 Stout; 4 Latter; 5 Commandments; 6 Truckle; 7 Duty; 8 Play the organ; 12 Sea water; 14 Unction; 16 Elopes; 18 Liege; 19 Zinc.
 QUICK - Across: 1 Rage; 3 Treatise; 9 Sparing; 10 Catch; 11 Misinforming; 13 Notify; 15 Allege; 17 Concomitance; 20 Begin; 21 Aconite; 22 Tethered; 23 Heat. Down: 1 Resuming; 2 Glass; 4 Region; 5 Accumulation; 6 Intense; 7 Echo; 8 Significance; 12 Vehement; 14 Thought; 16 Impale; 18 Naive; 19 Abet.

Quiz

1. Who was Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures from 1945 to 1973?
2. What is a tonka?
3. To which family of mammals does the vicuna belong?
4. Which planet's year is equivalent to 84 of our years?
5. Which country's national assembly is the Cortes?
6. In the Arabian Nights, who escapes from the Old Man of the Sea?
7. What is the USA's Beaver State?
8. What type of tree is the sweet bay?
9. What record fee did Manchester United pay for Andy Cole?
10. Of which planet is Deimos a moon?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Apollo; 2 Weightlifting; 3 Hydrogen; 4 Tiggy; 5 Pyongyang; 6 Very high frequency; 7 Bronze Age; 8 Anthony Burgess; 9 Parkhurst; 10 Carmen Miranda.

Niner: PARTICLES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

87553
531264
5789

gives a religious man,
gives a religious man,
gives a poet.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Remember the old days caravanning with the family, happy times, but would you want to go back to the cramped conditions and trekking across fields in the middle of the night to the washroom? No way!

These days holiday sites and the latest mobile homes are more like being on a cruise ship – minus the sea of course! I recently spent a week in the New Forest area at Hoburne Bashley in a caravan that was sheer luxury. My husband and I admired the countryside as we weaved our way along the roads with the ponies on either side – or sometimes in the middle of the road. Well it is their home after all.

The journey down there had been virtually trouble free in the sunshine and as we opened the door to our new home for the week the outlook got even brighter.

Step inside this top-rated two bedroom mobile home – new for this season – and it is really is home from home with all the mod cons, including a dishwasher, washing machine, TV in each room and a beautifully-finished large lounge.

But the best was yet to come. As I cornered out of the main bedroom to go into the en suite I found a lovely dressing area – something I would love to have at home – are you listening hubby! Combine that with the outside decking area, perfect for eating al fresco or relaxing with a glass of wine, and you can forget the cruise cabin, this suited me just fine.

And there was so much to do on the site – indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tennis courts, a beautifully

Lovely outdoor pool close to the indoor one



Sheer luxury – lounge area is very spacious



kept nine-hole golf course and plenty more for the little ones, as well as a restaurant on site and evening shows from the very talented entertainments team.

I remember fondly previous holidays at the various Hoburne sites and although this time it was different with no little ones in tow it was lovely in a different way as two good friends joined us for a few days. In fact the company does also offer adult-only holidays but personally I love to see the kids enjoying themselves.

We were lucky to have brilliant weather all week so ventured out to the many places nearby. Bournemouth

is just down the coast. But we headed closer to the site to the lovely towns of Lymington and Ringwood and the nearby beaches. Of course we could not be in the area without visiting the popular Beaulieu Motor Museum, with the earliest motor carriages to classic family saloons, and its sister attraction, the unspoilt haven of Buckler's Hard which remains a 'living' village.

Closer to the site, in fact just down the road in New Milton, is the fascinating Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, well worth a visit. Don't think that just because you are not an avid biking fan you won't enjoy this as

there are so many other items from across the years on show. On the way to shop at Ringwood we stopped off at the quaint village of Burley and spent a fun afternoon on the murder mystery trail.

The last day, feeling energetic, we hired bikes from The Woods Cyclery in Lyndhurst and headed off through the forest. Back on site my husband went off to get yet MORE golf practice while I enjoyed unwinding in the sauna and jacuzzi. As I said this is the life!

* For details go to www.hoburne.com

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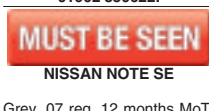
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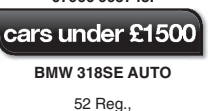
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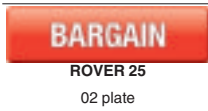
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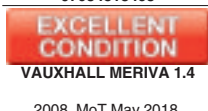
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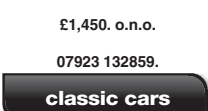
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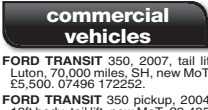
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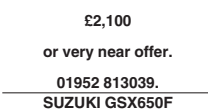


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Statement of Relevant Licensable Activities or Relevant Qualifying Club Activities which it is proposed will be carried on or from the premises.
 The Yeltz Bar has submitted an application to Dudley Council to obtain a club premises certificate.
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The full application can be inspected by contacting the Licensing Section (see below) between the hours of 9.00am and 4.30pm (Monday to Friday except public holidays). An on-line summary of the application can be viewed on www.dudley.gov.uk. Any representations by a Responsible Authority or Interested Party must be made in writing between: 19.7.2017 and 15.8.2017.

to Assistant Director of Law & Governance, Licensing Services, Unit 1 Hurst Business Park, Narrowboat Way, Brierley Hill DY5 1UF.
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ClassifiedAds

Affordable Micra arriving in dealers

By Leon Poultney

Nissan will complete the line-up of its all-new Micra range with the arrival of an entry-level 1.0-litre, 71hp three-cylinder petrol engine variant.

The new model, which will be available in Visia, Visia+, Acenta, N-Connecta and Tekna trim levels, will start at £11,995 and rise to to £17,435 for the most expensive models.

According to Nissan, the lower powered petrol engine will account for around 15 per cent of all Micra sales in the UK and for 20 per cent of sales in Europe, with customers enticed by the low price tag and affordable running costs.

Clean

Unfortunately, performance prowess isn't the little Micra's strongest point, with this engine taking 16.4 seconds to get to 62mph and managing just 98mph in terms of top speed.

However, it remains relatively clean, emitting 103g/km of CO2 and returning a respectable 61.4mpg on the combined cycle.

But the majority of customers in the UK are expected to part with an extra £970 for the 90hp 0.9-litre turbocharged petrol engine.

This model boasts 150Nm of torque, meaning its performance figures are more impressive, hitting 0-62 in 12 seconds, while it is also more economical – managing 64.2mpg claimed and emitting 99g/km of CO2.

In addition to the petrol engines, there is a 1.5-litre, 90hp four-cylinder diesel model, which went on sale earlier this year.



Nissan offers a Bose personal audio system with speakers fitted in the headrests



The car has semi-autonomous safety functionality including Intelligent Lane Intervention

New Micra has already impressed with its bold styling and athletic exterior, which is now longer, wider and lower than ever before, while two-tone soft touch materials have been used extensively inside to ensure the cabin feels like a more premium offering.

In addition to this, Nissan offers a Bose

personal audio system, which features speakers built in to the headrests, as well as advanced semi-autonomous safety functionality that have not previously been seen in this segment.

This includes Intelligent Lane Intervention, which gently corrects the Micra back on to the right path should it be required.



New Micra has impressed with its bold styling and athletic interior

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Peter Boland and his successful Alcobendas youth team in his adopted home of Spain



Peter with team-mates during his last game for the Alcobendas first team



Peter is now passing on his experience of the game



Peter with a team-mate from the veteran's XV

Black Country man has Spain hooked on rugby

IN the shadow of legendary football club Real Madrid, one Black Country man is helping to popularise a different sport in Spain's capital.

Football reigns as the national sport in Spain but rugby is gaining a foothold thanks to the help of Wolverhampton-born Peter Boland, who has called the country home for half his life.

The 53-year-old's influence on the game of rugby in his adopted home has seen him become recognised as one of the top 50 most influential people in the sport in the country.

Boland, who was born in Wolverhampton and went to school in Wednesfield, is head coach of a junior side at Alcobendas Rugby, based in Madrid, and has turned them into Spanish champions.

His knowledge of the game, which he picked up in the Black Country, is regarded so highly in Spain he has been asked to advise the Spanish Rugby Union about how to grow the sport nationally.

Influential

Remarkably, Boland was playing in Spain's top rugby division up until he was 48 which earned him applause.

He has been recognised by Spanish rugby magazine 'From 22' who paid tribute to him and ranked him as the 46th most influential rugby person in the country.

Boland, who lives with his Spanish wife and three children, called it 'flattering' to have been featured in the publication.

He said: "I only got involved in Spanish rugby around 11 years ago. For the magazine to place me in the top 50 contributors to the sport, because of my playing and coaching and contribution, it has given

SPORTING FEATURE

By Jamie Brassington

"They said they had a veterans team, but I said I wanted to play again. I played in the top Spanish divisions until I was 48."

me huge satisfaction and is very flattering."

Boland got into rugby during his time at Ward's Bridge Secondary School, back in Wednesfield, thanks to the influence of his teachers.

He played for his school team before turning out to represent Staffordshire, and during his time at Leeds University – where he studied a degree in modern languages in French and Spanish – he played for Walsall.

His university course saw him spend time in Spain and France. After graduating he went into the marketing industry, where he lived between London and Madrid.

Through work, he moved to Spain in 1995 where he met his wife and built his life.

Boland lives around 30 miles outside Madrid, but the club that he coaches at, Alcobendas, and his work, are based in the capital.

His working life put a hold on his playing career in 1995 and he didn't start turning out again until 2006.

"But at the ripe old age of 42 I turned up to Alco-

bendas saying I wanted to play again," said Boland. "They said they had a veterans team, but I said I wanted to play again. I played in the top Spanish divisions until I was 48.

"That put me on the (rugby) scene. I was recognised as a Brit who had integrated into Spanish life and started playing the highest level of rugby at 42." After retiring from the first team, Boland turned to coaching a youth team at the club. His side, who were at under-12 level at the time, went on to beat London Irish during a friendly match – a result that surprised the opposition.

But Boland, whose 13-year-old son plays junior rugby for the club, has not completely hung up his boots.

He still plays at veterans level and represents the Spanish veterans side. In his younger days he used to play as a prop, but he moved to a hooker following advice from his former coaches.

University

He is also providing a helping hand to the ruling body.

"Last year the Spanish Rugby Union had asked for advice, I work professionally in marketing and I teach at a university here," added Boland.

"For the last eight months, I have been advising Spanish rugby to build a strategic plan to build up rugby in Spain."

But rugby is still a small sport in Spain?

"That is changing," he said.

"What happens in Britain, most schools play rugby and/or football. But it is not in the curriculum in Spain and it is down to clubs to get kids involved."

"But rugby is growing by 20 per cent a year in Spain, there are now around 50,000 registered players."

Himley to shine a light on proceedings

HIMLEY are to further enhance their reputation as one of the leading lights on the club cricket scene. The Stourbridge Road club are set to break new ground by hosting a Birmingham League clash under floodlights.

The club's second XI will entertain Halesowen in a Premier Division Two game on Saturday, August 26, starting at 3pm.

First team skipper Greg Wright, one of the leading lights behind the club's Black Country T20 spectacular, said: "As a club we are proud to be staging the game and pleased to be pushing the boundaries for club cricket."

"We put the idea to the Birmingham League and they were prepared to go with it. It will be interesting to see the contrast between batting first and then batting under lights in the longer format of the game."

The Black Country T20 competition will see Himley, Brewood, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge and Halesowen and a Staffs Clubs select XI do battle from August 21-26. More floodlit action follows on August 27 when four sides compete in finals day of the NatWest Under-19s Staffs Club T20.

Players in swing for golf day fundraiser

MORE than 80 golfers took to the fairways to a building society raised more than £5,500 for a local health and wellbeing charity.

The West Brom staged its annual sporting fundraiser at The Staffordshire Golf Club, near Wombourne, in aid of its nominated charity, the Kaleidoscope Plus Group.

Business partners, suppliers and staff joined forces to form 20 teams who did battle in a stableford competition, won by insurance broker AJ Gallagher. There were nearest the pin and longest drive challenges, while a raffle was also held to raise additional funds.

The West Brom's David Taylor, who helped to organise the event, said: "Our golf day is always very popular and the number of entrants is growing every year. All the players enjoyed themselves and to raise £5,500 for the Kaleidoscope Plus Group was a great effort from everyone who took part."

Monica Shafaq, Kaleidoscope's chief executive, said: "The golf day represents a terrific start to our partnership with the West Brom."

Shelley shows class to increase his lead

ANOTHER four race wins ensured Burntwood ace Lloyd Shelley walked away from Darley Moor with a second clean sweep.

Shelley – who has now won a staggering eight straight races at the last two meetings – increased his lead in two classes at the Derbyshire circuit.

The meeting included some fantastic battles out on track throughout the 23 race programme, none more so than the duels between Shelley in the two Formula 600 and Sound of Thunder class races against Nottingham's Tom Fisher. The results leave Shelley on 54 points in both classes, 12 points ahead of Steven Procter in the Formula 600 and 24 in front of Jamie Medhurst in the Sound of Thunder.

Anthony Eades and his Wolverhampton passenger Keith Box took the Open Sidecar honours on each occasion, recording two overall fifth places. The results sees the pair maintain their class lead on 54 points, with Brian Wilson and Mike Fairhurst second (32) and Ray Thomas and Neil Aslaksen (21) third. Dudley's Mark Cockerton is second in the Classic 350 class.



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Greenwood injury mars Cradley night

CRADLEY finished with a flourish to see off Stoke 54-35 on Monday, but ended the night with concerns over the fitness of Dan Greenwood.

Number three Greenwood fell in heat 12 at Monmore with the red lights already on for a previous incident, hurting his left shoulder which contains a metal plate from a past injury.

It marred a stellar show from the Motor Market Heathens, who were pushed all the way until a trio of 5-1s saw them gallop away. Danny Ayres bagged a five-ride full maximum with skipper Tom Perry remaining unbeaten by an opponent.

Ayres was within a second of the National League track record in a consummate victory before Conor Dwyer led a second 3-3. Greenwood slipped out of contention on turn two of heat three having ran very wide while Tony Atkin edged Stoke ahead. Perry led another 3-3, matched by Mitchell Davey in heat five.

Paul Burnett was excluded for running Luke Harris into the fence in heat six. With Ayres in front in the re-run, Heathens were on a 5-1 until Harris hit the fence on turn four.

The hosts moved in front when Perry roared away and Dwyer passed David Wallinger for a 4-2. A maximum pushed Cradley five ahead with Greenwood leading home Lawlor. Ayres' third win extended the gap. Perry made in three out of three then Cradley's Ayres and Perry cruised in heats 13 and 15. Lawlor and Dwyer emulating them in between.

Four-wicket victory sets Halesowen up to take on leaders

HALESOWEN moved into third place in the Birmingham League second division following a four-wicket win at C&R Hawks. It sets them up for their game at leaders Fordhouses this weekend.

Shropshire's Omar Ali hit 48 in Hawks total of 120 all out in 25.1 overs with Eddie Rhodes (5-56) and Dylan Ross-Watts (4-42) taking the bulk of the wickets. They now have 57 wickets between them, with Ross-Watt 33 and Rhodes 24.

In reply, Halesowen lost four quick wickets but 41 not out from Masharraf Shazad and 36 from Kester Moseley steered them to victory.

Captain Richard Brooker said: "All in all we are well placed for the run-in and we need to keep our consistencies with a big-one against Fordhouses. If we can win or at least reduce the points deficit it will send a clear message to the division of our intent and that's our aim."

Saturday's game starts at noon. The seconds are at home at Seth Somers Park to Knowle & Dorridge, 12.30pm start. The third XI take on Hanley Castle at Earls High School at 1pm and the fourths are at Avoncroft seconds at 1pm.

Right royal do at tennis club doubles



Finalists Graham Whyley and Joan Bowles, left, and Shaun Ryder and Annabel Kuligowski

IN 1977, to celebrate the Queens Silver Jubilee, Wollaston Lawn Tennis Club started a mixed competition, run as a handicap tournament.

Muriel and Ted Wright donated original silver salvers for the tournament 40 years ago and ever since the competition, held around Wimbledon time, has seen the entry fee increase by only a penny per year.

This year's entry was therefore 40p and it was special since it has been 40 years since the queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee.

Tournament organiser John Cutler said "The

spirit of the tournament lives on. With plenty of Union Jacks flying, the tournament was held in good weather.

"All Players played in a variety of red, white, and blue outfits."

The final was contested between Shaun Ryder and Annabel Kuligowski versus Graham Whyley and Joan Bowles.

Shaun and Annabel took the 2017 title and, after a toast to the Queen and presentation of trophies, a traditional afternoon tea was enjoyed by all.

BEN BASQUES IN CYCLE GLORY

A TEENAGE cycling ace has signalled a warning of his considerable potential by winning one of the most prestigious junior races on the planet.

Wordsley's Ben Healy has only been competing on open roads for a few months and has spent much of the season juggling his passion for pedalling with revision for his GCSE exams.

But that has not stopped him clocking up no fewer than eight victories with his latest triumph one which has made the rest of the cycling world stand up and take note.

Healy, who races for the Oxford-based Zappi team, finished top of the general classification at the Junior Tour of the Basque Country, a five-day stage race which includes a host of top professionals among its former winners.

"We knew Ben was doing well and knew he had good form but even I have to admit it came as a big surprise to see him win," said delighted dad Brian.

Proud

"The Junior Tour of the Basque Country is a very tough race which features the best young riders in the world. For Ben to win it is a tremendous achievement. We are very proud of him."

Healy's success was made all the more impressive by the fact he has also had to deal with setbacks and the increased pressure of exams during his standout season.

The 16-year-old was dropped from British Cycling's Olympic Mountain Biking Programme last Christmas and looked likely to have a relatively quiet year on the road.

But he picked up notable early season wins at Stourport Circuit events, before taking a stunning victory at the Halesowen Cycling Club road race in May, riding away from more experienced riders. His performances have been enough to see him move from a third to first category rider in the space of just a few months.



Ben Healy finished top of the general classification in the Junior Tour of Spain's Basque region

Running in footsteps of Harriers legend

A GROUP of Dudley Kingswinford athletes took part in the Andy Holden Memorial five-mile race commemorating one of Tipton Harriers' finest athletes who represented Great Britain in the Munich Olympics and European Championships in 1972.

The host club got the big guns out for their own event

and bagged most of the prizes but DK were certainly rubbing shoulders with them and holding their own in a rarefied field in a race that was a fast blast along the canal towpaths that Holden made his own when training throughout the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Stuart Perkins led the hoops home in ninth place in 27.45,

Dave Norman was 17th in 29.25, Mark Homer 25th in 30.38, Steve Parr in 33.11. to take 39th place, Andrew Weaver 48th in 34.20 and John Andrews 74th in 37.07.

Despite coming back from a break in training Helen Tromans was 82nd overall in 43.44 in a Droitwich 10k, taking 1st place in her age group.

Tank blasts way to his second win

RYAN Aston recorded a second successive victory with a well-earned points win over Cristian Hoskin-Gomez at the top of BCB Promotions' show on Sunday afternoon.

'Sunday Best' took place the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill and featured a host of Black Country boxers.

Aston, topping the bill, took on the tough Plymouth man for the second time and, again, came out on top. It was an entertaining affair with Hoskin-Gomez taking the fight to 'Tank'.

The Dudley middleweight didn't drop a round to record a 59-55 points win but was docked a point when referee Shaun Messer penalised him for holding.

Also on the card, Kingswinford's Danny Ball enjoyed a perfect start to his professional career. The super welterweight, whose brother Jamie was a Midlands Area Champion, stopped his Czech opponent inside the first round.

Martin Karbhel was hurt by a left hook to the body and a flurry of shots put him on the canvass. He failed to beat the count much to the delight of Ball's army of supporters.

Coseley's Tommy Ghent made a welcome return to the ring after four years! and looked, at times, as if he'd never been away. The 24 year-old welterweight recorded a 40-36 points shut-out win against tough Bulgarian Teodor Nikolov. Old Hill's Manny Zaber was back in action after four months on the sidelines to record a 39-37 victory over Bristol's Harvey Hemsley.

Old Halesonians get chance for revenge

OLD Halesonians face their old foes in the North Midlands Cup.

Bournville secured the county cup on the more tries rule after the sides were level at 25-25 in May's final at Dudley Kingswinford. They begin their defence with a re-run of last season's final in next season's quarter-finals and will have home advantage on the weekend of either August 26 or October 7.

In one of two preliminary rounds, Dudley Kingswinford travel to Hereford with the winners facing either Worcester Wanderers or Bromsgrove.

Cape Hill were drawn away to Birmingham & Solihull in the first round.

*** The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketterly, Telford. Thursday, July 27, 2017

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